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# THE JEW AND CHRISTIANITY

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*Some Phases, Ancient and Modern, of the Jewish Attitude towards Christianity*

BY

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*First published 1927*

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*Printed in Great Britain*

# INTRODUCTORY

On the general subject, the treatment of Jesus and Christianity in Jewish literature from the close of the Talmud period (end of sixth century) to the present day, there is still no systematic survey. The subject is not an attractive one. The field is very wide, the literature is not very accessible and it is in the highest degree wearisome. The bulk of it is controversial; and nothing is more wearisome than controversial literature once we have passed beyond the atmosphere and spirit of the time, lost touch with the current idiom and changed our ideas as to the relative importance of the various issues at stake, and, above all, when we are totally out of sympathy with the lines of argumentation and are unable to accept the greater part of the premises of the disputants.

It is not proposed to touch in these lectures upon the mass of Jewish-Christian controversial literature; they are confined in the main to the Jewish attitude to our Lord as it appears in certain Jewish expressions of opinion which were meant only for Jewish ears and were not primarily intended (like so much of present-day Jewish opinion) to be overheard by Christians, and to a few Jewish writings on the

subject which are not, avowedly, controversial. Even in this selection it is not possible to be exhaustive : all that is here proposed is to take what may fairly be regarded as representative statements at various stages in the history of Christian-Jewish relations and, as far as possible, sketch the general conditions out of which those expressions of opinion arose.

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*The Lectures are printed in the form in which they were first delivered, and a few lapses into colloquial style have been allowed to pass uncorrected.*

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| | INTRODUCTORY . . . . . | v |
| I. | DURING THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CENTURY . . | 1 |
| II. | THE TALMUDIC ERA AND EARLY MEDIÆVAL TIMES . . . . . | 18 |
| III. | FROM THE CRUSADES TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . . | 39 |
| IV. | IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . | 62 |
| V. | AT THE PRESENT TIME . . . . | 86 |
| | NOTES . . . . . | 115 |
| | INDEX . . . . . | 119 |

## *CHAPMAN LECTURES*

*The chapters of this book were delivered as Lectures at Sion College, London, during October,* 1926. *They were arranged by the S.P.C.K., on the initiative and with the help of Mr. Conrad Chapman and American friends.*

# THE JEW AND CHRISTIANITY

## I

## DURING THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CENTURY

THERE is an outstanding fact, probably unparalleled, which is distinctive of the story of the Christian Church. Side by side with the Christian Church God has allowed another, the Jewish Church, to persist. These two are, so to speak, two trees arising from the same stock. The one owes its existence to its *acceptance* of Jesus as Christ; the other, it can certainly be said, owes its continued existence to its *rejection* of Jesus as Christ. There they are: they have from the first existed side by side (for modern Judaism is just as much an immediate product of the first century as is Christianity); they have stood, nineteen hundred years, spectators of each other's lives, critics of each other's beliefs; for the most part sharing, stage by stage, the same civilization, living in more or less close proximity within the same countries; and knowing (or believing themselves to know) the most, including the best and the worst, of each other.

Thus, throughout its history, Christianity has been

provided with a gauge, a criterion, a measuring rod. Judaism, through the long expanses of history, has placed itself alongside of Christianity; it has applied itself as a measuring rod; it, alone of the contemporary civilizations and religions, has consistently hovered around the flanks of Christian civilization, a perpetual witness, itself changing scarcely at all, while recording, stage after stage, its impressions of Christianity.

In the absolute sense (or, if you prefer it, from the Christian point of view) Judaism as a measuring line is distorted and distorting: as St. Paul puts it, "a blindness in part is come upon Israel"; but in the *relative* sense Judaism alone, through its peculiar circumstances, offers us a systematic, consistent, independent, external criterion of the various forms of Christianity at various stages of its history. What we propose to study now is Christianity (or, rather, Christians) at various stages in history, from New Testament times to the present day, as measured by this largely consistent gauge.

From the time when Jesus stood before the Jewish High Priest, and throughout nineteen centuries, Christianity has come up for judgment before representative Judaism; it has been testified against by countless successions of witnesses; it has been charged with many and various crimes; it has been the victim often of false testimony.

But, if one may be allowed to give the moral of the story before the story itself, it is this: relatively, the judgment of Judaism is just; the Jewish attitude to Christianity, veering as it does from the one

extreme point of utter loathing and detestation, through phases of more or less cold neutrality and defensive hostility, to a phase approaching appreciation of certain Christians and of reverence for Jesus their Master—this Jewish attitude has varied with almost mathematical certainty according to the precise degree in which Christians have shown themselves real followers, in spirit and deed, of their Saviour.

The more Christians have conformed to the spirit of Christ, the more has Jewish respect been drawn to Christianity and to Christ. The farther Christians have drawn back from following after Jesus in spirit and in truth, so have Christians brought into discredit Christianity and Christ Himself.

It is the veriest truism : those outside the Christian fold judge Christianity and our Lord Himself, not primarily from the Gospel records, not primarily from the official teaching of the Church; but, first and foremost, from the living witness of Christians—average professing Christians. The more worthy Christians prove themselves to be, the more worthy a conception will the stranger form of Christ. Conversely, the more unworthy the conception which the stranger forms of Christ and His teaching, the more unworthy must be the so-called followers of Christ. The Christian is supposed to be what, in fact, he ought to be (or ought to try to be)—a mirror of Christ.

So we may be able to find some salutary discipline in searching out what have been in the past, and especially what are to-day, the various forms of

Jewish attitude and opinion with regard to Christ, Christians and Christianity. The Jew has ever been on the watch; his vision may have been distorted, but, with allowance made for its inevitable margin of error, it has been consistent.

The results of this search are, on the whole, far from flattering to us Christians. They are the more humiliating when we think of what is most probably their real basis—our own failure to show forth Christ to the world in our own lives: because we, Christ's soldiers and servants, have so far forgotten our professions and betrayed our trust as to put our Lord and Master to an open shame.

In the New Testament period it might be supposed that relations between Jews and Christians were clearly defined. We might sum up the position briefly as follows:

Our Lord taught certain things and He made certain claims. He taught fundamental principles of morality which were sometimes in direct opposition to those of the ordinary accredited Jewish teachers; and He claimed that in His person all the Jewish longings for a Messiah who should save the Jewish race, soul and body, as a state and as individuals—that all these longings were fulfilled and satisfied in His person. After our Lord's crucifixion this teaching and these claims were promulgated, with more and more success, first to a limited extent among the Jews and isolated Gentiles in Palestine, and then to a much more marked extent among both Jews and Gentiles in certain other parts of the Roman Empire.

As regards the Jews we must beware of making a false simplification—that some Jews accepted Jesus' claims and teaching, while others rejected them; and that the Jewish followers of Jesus gave up their Jewish allegiance and ceased to be Jews, while the others, by their refusal to accept Jesus, by this very act of refusal, proclaimed their Jewishness. The course of things was hardly so uncomplicated as this.

For our particular purpose we shall do best to draw our information not from the Gospels (which give the crystallized Christian presentation of facts and controversies), but from two other sources: the letters of St. Paul, and the surviving scraps of Jewish opinion preserved in the earliest elements of the Talmud.

The Epistles of St. Paul are the earliest Christian documents which we possess. What is the picture we there find of Jewish and Christian relations? We cannot afford time for details, but the outline is this:

St. Paul preached the Gospel of Jesus to the Jews outside Palestine, and especially to the non-Jews. He was soon faced with the problem whether, to become a member of this young body of believers, it was necessary for the Gentile to become a Jew—that is, whether Christianity was an essentially Jewish creed, with all its roots and all its hopes bound up with Judaism. As we all know, he decided to the contrary: the sole condition was to be belief in Jesus as Lord and Christ: "In Him is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision."

Only after much trouble, and after grave heart-searchings among the other and older Christians, was St. Paul able to press this view upon his brother apostles in Palestine—Jewish Christians who had so far envisaged the faith in Jesus solely within a Jewish framework.

The fact which we find difficult to realize, but which nevertheless is a fact, is that Christianity lived several decades in Jewish surroundings and as a *Jewish* belief; and, consequently, in many or most respects, did not transcend the limits of Judaism. So long as the early Christians in Palestine conformed with the many external requirements of the Jewish religion (circumcision, attendance at the Temple during the three great festivals, observed the laws as to forbidden foods, and so forth)—so long as they conformed with these, the external laws and practices of Judaism, they seem to have been strangely free to hold their beliefs in Jesus; at least none dreamed of regarding them as men who had forfeited or thrown off their Jewishness.

But then came the controversy: does Christianity involve the acceptance of the Law of Moses as defined and elaborated by Jewish custom, by the so-called "tradition of the elders"? It was a long and bitter controversy. But the increasing number of Gentile adherents put the matter beyond doubt: the Jewish law was a burden on the Gentiles "too grievous to be borne."

We may turn now to the purely Jewish point of view.

Sects within Judaism were no new thing. In themselves such sects were only expressions of

particular ideals. Thus, in the time of our Lord, four main parties were very much in evidence.

There were the Sadducees, the aristocracy of the time, members of the priestly families, the holders of such official posts as the Roman overlords allowed to be held by members of the conquered Jewish people. In religious matters the Sadducees were the conservatives of the time, hating change and religious innovations.[1]

Another sect, familiar to us from the Gospels, was that of the Pharisees. The Gospels give us only one aspect of these people. Jewish sources show us that the Pharisees were, so to speak, the *modernists* of the time, who brought the Law of Moses " up to date," by steadily accumulating traditions explanatory of the Law of Moses, and by adapting the Law of Moses to present-day requirements. In another way, important for our purpose, they were nationalists, in so far as they saw in their traditions an exclusively national possession : to their mind the Jewish national identity depended on the preservation and practice of the Mosaic law with its traditional interpretations and accumulations. Again, as opposed to the Sadducees, who naturally as office-holders sought at all costs to be on good terms with the Romans, the Pharisees were a popular party, the democratic party, with the interests of the people at heart, and hating the foreign Roman administration.[2]

A third sect was that of the Essenes. We hear nothing of these in the Gospels, and it is difficult to know exactly what part they played in the Jewish

life as a whole. Not much perhaps, since their ideal of existence was rather monastic seclusion, a separated community life, away from the workaday world, in the solitude of the Dead Sea plain.[3]

A fourth sect, only hinted at in the Gospels, was that of the Zealots. These were the enthusiastic and pugnacious nationalists of the time, sworn to throw off the Roman yoke. It was they who tried on every possible opportunity to make trouble for the Roman administration. In the religious sense they were in sympathy with the Pharisees.[4]

Therefore, for a new group of Jews to come together, with ideals drawn from the teaching of Jesus—this was, in itself, at first, nothing outrageously strange. We remember Gamaliel's judgment in the Acts of the Apostles—that it was best to wait and see how this new sect should turn out, whether innocent or harmful, that if it were of God it would endure, but if not it would soon die away. This new Jewish-Christian party in the eyes of the religious leaders of the time was, at the worst, simply regarded as guilty of *minuth*, namely, a variety of Jewish heresy, or, rather, Jewish sectarianism.

All the information we find in Jewish sources traceable to the first century shows that, in the beginning, the relations between the Jews and the Jewish-Christians were amicable; and, what is far greater matter for surprise, the Jewish attitude to our Lord Himself is, the earlier we penetrate, marked by the less degree of hostility. We are forced to the conclusion that so long as Pharisaic Judaism (which, we must remember, was the only form of

Judaism which survived the destruction of Jerusalem)—so long as it records personal or almost personal reminiscence of our Lord, the surviving record is not viciously hostile (as later became the case); but the farther the Jews were removed from the time of our Lord's earthly life, and the more dependent they became for knowledge of Jesus upon later generations of *Christians*, then so much the worse became the Jewish characterization of Jesus.

The actual condemnation of our Lord turned on the Roman verdict that He was a political danger. His prosecution was solely in the hands of the Jewish *political* leaders, the Sadducees, the priestly caste; and, in the main, we are safe in concluding that it was primarily by them that the extreme penalty was connived at. The moral principles which Jesus laid down may often have clashed with the principles advocated by the Pharisees, or by some of them; but, as Jews nowadays are never tired of insisting, the ethical and religious teaching of Jesus was fundamentally Jewish, and can be paralleled in detail after detail by the teaching of the Pharisaic religious and ethical code buried in the Talmud. Therefore it was not the *Pharisees* who were responsible for Jesus' death; nor *a priori* was it impossible that, after His death, they should retain feelings towards Him more tolerant in tone than those which later became the rule.

And such is, more or less, what we find in the early references. For example, there is a curious passage in the Talmud [5] which contrasts Jesus with the heathen prophet Balaam. It runs as follows:

The nephew of the Emperor Titus [6] wished to become a Jew. He first raised the ghost of Titus and asked his advice. Titus advised him not to become a Jew, because the religious customs of Israel were too many and too difficult. He then raised up Balaam, and when he was asked his opinion about the Jews, he burst out in a rage, exclaiming, "Seek not their peace nor their good." Then at last he summoned the spirit of Jesus, who answered, "Seek their good and do not seek their harm, for everyone that hurteth Israel is as if he hurt the apple of God's eye."

So we find that at this time, roughly at the beginning of the second century, Jesus was regarded as one well-disposed to Israel.

Another somewhat obscure passage [7] tells how one of the most respected and venerated of the Rabbis in the latter half of the first century, namely, Rabbi Eliezer the Great, was asked his opinion about Jesus, and he refused to say that he believed that Jesus had no share in the world to come. That is to say, he believed that Jesus was a Jew worthy of acceptance in the sight of God.

This same Rabbi Eliezer the Great is also made to say that he was attracted by a certain interpretation of Scripture repeated to him in the name of Jesus.[8] He was even suspected of a leaning towards *minuth*, in the shape of this new Christian-Jewish heresy.

We may now turn to the attitude towards the first-century Christians generally.

In early elements of the Talmud and the Rabbinic

writings there is frequent reference to *minim*, persons guilty of *minuth*, some form of Jewish sectarianism. Many of these references are almost certainly aimed at the early Christians and at the teaching of St. Paul. They are partly rules to separate orthodox Jews from the Christians, and partly warnings against Christian and particularly Pauline teachings.

Thus we learn that Christian offerings of animals, meal, wine, fruits, were not valid offerings in the Temple (though it is not known whether the Pharisees, who stated these rules, had any power to enforce them); Christian writings were to be regarded as books of sorcery; intermarriage with the Christians was forbidden; copies of the Scriptures written by them were to be destroyed; also animals slaughtered by them were forbidden food.

We have much information to show how the more orthodox Jews tried to guard against the inroad of Christian beliefs and practices. Perhaps the most curious is this. The most solemn moment in the Synagogue service is the repetition of the *Shema*, a selection of short passages from the Pentateuch, beginning, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is one." We are told that in earlier times the Ten Commandments were included in this selection of passages; but with the rise of the Christians the Ten Commandments were left out, for fear of seeming to support the alleged Christian view that these were the only laws given to Moses from Mount Sinai.[10] Here we have a curious echo of our Lord's teaching that the Ten Commandments and the law of love were at the root of true religion.[11]

There is quite a series of this kind of regulation, which, notice, aims at excluding the possible expression of Christian ideas in the actual Synagogue service itself; from which we must needs infer that there was an even closer contact of Christian and Jew in the Synagogue than we should have supposed from the Acts of the Apostles. Sometimes it would seem that the very leaders of the Synagogue worship were open to suspicion of Christian leanings. Thus a certain blessing, acclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven, was usually said in a whisper for fear that the Romans should think the sentiment treasonable; but, with the currency of the Christian idea of the Kingdom of Heaven, it was ordered that the blessing be said in a loud voice,[12] because some Jews were suspected of quietly interpolating Christian sentiments. Later, as the antagonism of Jews to the Christian-Jewish brethren grew more acute, there was included in the Synagogue service a prayer openly denouncing the *minim*.[13] But this in itself proved to be insufficient; a fresh regulation proved necessary to the effect that, though it did not greatly matter if the Synagogue reader left out certain passages in the service, yet, if he left out this "Denunciation of the *minim*," he must go back and repeat it, under penalty of being suspected of Christianity or some other variety of *minuth*.[14]

As against the teaching of St. Paul, we find stress being laid on the importance of works as against faith.[15] Again, just at this time, the second half of the first Christian century, we find a series of rulings denouncing those who evolve new meanings from

Scripture.[16] This is most curious and remarkable, because this kind of thing—what we should call drawing new allegorical interpretations from the Scriptures—was a very favourite habit indeed among the Rabbis, both before and after this time. But that Christians, and especially St. Paul, should do this to further their own purposes, brought the habit into temporary disrepute among the Rabbis.

Another habit they were accustomed to denounce just at this time was that of trying to probe the reasons and the underlying purpose of various of the laws of Moses.[17] Such laws, the Rabbis insisted (but insisted only temporarily, during the Jewish-Christian period), were to be accepted humbly as divine, arbitrary decrees, and on no account to be questioned or theorized about. All this seems to have reference to the Christian arguments (so frequent in the Epistles of St. Paul) which sought to dethrone the position of the Law of Moses.

These are somewhat vague hints at the Jewish attitude, showing that relations were such that common worship in the Synagogue went on for some time. This could not last, and with the spread of the teachings of St. Paul, which put aside as unnecessary the Law of Moses and the Traditions of the Elders, the Jews took means to make this common worship impossible. In the end, we find R. Tarphon asserting bluntly[18] that Christianity was far more dangerous to Judaism than paganism was: the Gospels and the writings of the Jewish Christians must be burnt even if they contain the names of God; for while paganism fails to recognize

the truth of Judaism for want of knowledge, *minuth* (in which we must include Jewish-Christianity) denies what it fully knows.*

Before leaving this first phase, we must touch on one episode which is most illuminating as showing the something more, even much more, than tolerant attitude held by the leading Jews towards the earliest Christians.

Not many years after the Ascension the head of the Christians in Jerusalem was James, the brother of the Lord. Of his manner of life and opinions we learn something from early Christian tradition and from the Epistle of James himself in the New Testament. He was a typical Jewish Christian, observing scrupulously the Jewish law, and combining this with the ascetism practised by certain of the early Christians. From his Epistle we see him as a characteristic teacher of Jewish piety in its best form. For the most trustworthy account of his death we are indebted to the Jewish historian Josephus.[19] He tells how Annas the Second, the High Priest, arrested James together with others, and brought them before the Sanhedrin and accused them of being dangerous offenders; they were put to death by stoning. Annas was, of course, a Sadducee, one of the official families who had connived at the crucifixion of Jesus. It is not, then, a

* The substance of the preceding paragraphs sums up the discussion of the subject in I. H. Weiss, *Dor dor v'dor'shāv* (1891, reprinted Berlin, 1924), pp. 232–9. It should, however, be pointed out that though the Jewish Christians were certainly included among the *minim*, there is always some uncertainty in applying any reference to *minim* specifically to Jewish Christians.

matter for surprise that during an interim between the departure of one Roman Governor and the arrival of his successor, in the year 62, the High Priest seized the opportunity to get rid of the leader of the Christian sect. But what *is* a matter worthy of note is that this condemnation of James, the brother of the Lord, so aroused the indignation of the religious leaders of the Jews, that they sent a protest to Albinus, the Roman Governor of Syria, and to King Agrippa, with the result that Annas the High Priest was deposed.

This episode leaves us with a fairly good idea of Christian and Jewish relations in the year 62.

To sum up. So long as Christianity remained within the confines of Jewish nationality and conformed to the elaboration of the laws of Moses, the Traditions of the Elders, which in a measure served as the Jewish national passport, then official Pharisaic Judaism had little quarrel with Christianity and no hard words to say of its Founder. Disfavour, however, began and increased with the increasing influx of Gentiles into the Christian fold, and the treatment of the Law as a thing of secondary importance among Jewish Christians, and as a non-necessity among Gentile Christians.

We have seen the measures adopted by the Jews to isolate their Christian brethren. It only wanted some decisive event to split this dual loyalty of the Jewish Christians—their loyalty to Jesus their Messiah and their loyalty to Judæa their nation. That decisive event came with the Jewish rebellion, in the years 69 and 70.

The little Jewish race defied the mighty Roman Empire. It must now fight for its life. Those who saw in their Jewish nationalism their most valuable possession rallied round the rebel leaders : even the Essenes, those Jewish ascetics, who had left the world for the sake of leading a higher, retired life in monastic seclusion—even they threw in their lot with the rebels. But the Jewish Christians held aloof. They left Jerusalem and went to Pella, in Transjordan, opposite Beisan.

One theory [20] has it that the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament was the final decisive appeal to the Jewish Christians, urging them to separate from their Jewish countrymen for good and all. This Epistle tells, in the allegorical method of the time, how the crucified Messiah was both the sacrificial victim and the atoning High Priest, thus superseding the religious system of the Temple. " Jesus also," the writer goes on to say, " Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us, therefore, go forth unto Him, without the camp (that is, outside the Jewish community), bearing His reproach; for we have here (in Jerusalem) no abiding city." The same writer likewise tells the Jewish Christians that they (contrary to the Jewish nationalists) have received a " kingdom that *cannot* be shaken."

In any case the breach was now complete. Christians no longer felt bound by any allegiance to Judaism. So Christianity, with all its Jewish treasures—its belief in the divine unity, its Jewish Messiah as Saviour, Teacher and living exemplar,

its Jewish scriptures, its moral teaching derived from the Jewish prophets—with these Jewish treasures, Christianity turned its face wholly to the Gentile world.

At the time it is most unlikely that this withdrawal of a few "Jewish sectaries" made much impression on the Jewish consciousness as a whole. But it marks the beginning of the stage which still continues—the Jew wandering through the world as a stranger, watching the world transformed by a faith which came to the world through the Jews, seeing this faith only too often misapplied—deeds, shameful in their savagery, done in the name of Christianity, and seeing himself as a Jew held up in horror and contempt by the Gentiles as the greatest hater of Christianity. But, if the Jew did, in truth, become the deepest hater of Christianity, it was most certainly the Christian who had the largest share in making him so.

## II

## THE TALMUDIC ERA AND EARLY MEDIÆVAL TIMES

In the first of these lectures we dealt with the salient points in the relations, so far as we could learn them, between official Judaism and the members of the first-century Christian Church. We saw that what governed these relations was the attitude of the Church to its Jewish origins. The original Christians were Jews. Christianity first appeared as a sect within Judaism. Only after some decades did it find the need to sever its relations with its Jewish parent. So long as it remained, even nominally, within the national confines of Judaism and observed the Law, the hall-mark of the Jew, it did not seriously fall foul of official Judaism. We even had a glimpse of the illuminating fact that, the earlier we penetrate, the less degree of hostility marks the Jewish attitude to our Lord Himself. Only when, through the influence of St. Paul, the Law was deposed from its primacy and became a secondary matter for Jewish Christians and a superfluity for the Gentile Christian—only then was the issue finally joined and Christianity repelled as a dangerous heresy.

The Jewish Christians met their opponents more than halfway. When faced by the "acid test" of their Jewishness—the rebellion against the Romans —the Jewish Christians, compelled to choose between the rival loyalties to their Saviour and to their race, found that they must throw off allegiance to their race. Christianity thereby became a faith for the Gentiles.

What effect had this on the attitude of the parent Judaism to its daughter faith? The withdrawal of a comparatively few "Jewish sectaries" could not be a very noticeable event in the consciousness of the Jews, torn as they then were by their own distracting troubles, striving by any means to heal the wounds of their shattered national body. Since Christianity ceased to be Jewish it ceased to be a subject for Jewish attention—friendly attention or hostile attention. Two centuries, almost, were to pass by, before Christianity was to impinge upon the Jewish consciousness as an external factor, to such an extent as to provoke any noticeable reaction of feeling.

So up to, roughly, the year 150, while Christianity was still an insignificant sect among the Gentiles, Jewish records, so far as they speak at all, give one the impression of an attitude of uninterested, non-curious, and rather ill-informed tolerance. It is what we should have expected. Memories of Christianity's existence within Judaism cannot have been very strong; perhaps what Jews heard about the progress of Jewish ideals among the heathen, even though those ideals had taken Christian shape

—such knowledge might even have afforded them some measure of gratification.

Early passages in the Talmud still contain hostile references to the *minim*, among whom were numbered the Jewish Christians; but these never refer to *Gentile* Christians; they are aimed at those Jews who, after the destruction of Jerusalem, joined the Christians and were supposed, rightly or wrongly, to use their old knowledge of Jews and Jewish ways to betray their old co-religionists to the civil authorities—since, after the Romans had, with such difficulty, suppressed the Jewish revolt they issued severe laws against the Jews, in order to break up any national solidity, or any powers of national growth of which the Jews might still be capable. Thus it is that, at an early stage, the passage in the Synagogue service, to which we called attention in the last lecture, denouncing the *minim* or Jewish Christians—was changed. No longer was it the Christians, as such, on whom curses were called down, but the *malshinim*, the Jewish "slanderers," renegades, informers, open enemies of the Jewish race.[1]

I must pass as rapidly as possible over these earlier stages, since I am anxious to devote these lectures mainly to the more modern aspects of the subject, and especially to what we may consider the *causative factors* of Jewish opinion. This lecture I shall devote to the more unpleasant points, namely, the Jewish attitude in Talmudic times (roughly from A.D. 200 to 600), and the general attitude in the early Middle Ages.

A great deal of attention has for centuries been devoted to the real and supposed references to Christianity in the Talmud. The Talmud has been condemned as one gigantic piece of anti-Christian scurrility. Many and many a time the Christian authorities have tried to suppress it altogether; for many centuries a rigorous Christian censorship was maintained in an attempt to strike out every real or supposed reference to Christianity or to substitute something harmless in its place. These attempts at suppression and censorship have always failed. The Jews were compelled to submit to the censorship of the printed editions of the Talmud, but certain manuscript copies have survived unaffected by the censorship. Also the Jews took pains to preserve the memory of the censored passages by making manuscript collections of all the deletions; and these survive.[2] So it is not difficult to learn what those references to Christianity were.

But, first of all, what is the Talmud?

In our Lord's time there existed a mass of what the Gospels call "the tradition of the elders," namely, interpretations of the laws of Moses which had been handed down through several generations by word of mouth. As the Jewish civilization and society developed, the primitive laws of Moses did not always meet the requirements of daily life. Numerous complications arose and disputes as to the meaning of certain laws, their precise degree of applicability in changed circumstances, and as to how far their principles should govern innovations in daily life never thought of in the old code. There-

fore, around the laws of Moses a mass of interpretation accumulated—very much as in England, around the Acts of Parliament, decisions of the law courts provide a mass of rulings and precedents on points which, in the original Act, had been left ambiguous or which had never been foreseen.

Among the Jews these traditions were not reduced to writing until about the year 200 of our era. Then they were put together in systematic form, under six main heads and sixty-three subheadings. The result is a book nearly twice the length of our New Testament, known as the *Mishnah.*

In the course of the next three centuries the religious leaders of the Jews in Palestine and Babylonia accumulated another thick layer of tradition and interpretation around and about this Mishnah. As we know, the Jews are a disputatious and legalistically-minded race. During these three centuries the Jews had no national territory to govern, so the best minds and energies of the nation were directed to the interpretation of their national literature—chief and foremost, this Mishnah.

Paragraph by paragraph they discussed this Mishnah, thrashed out its details, dragged in every possible subject nearly or distantly related, refurbished old traditions confirming or contradicting what the Mishnah said, dragged in their own contemporary ideas on nearly every subject under the sun. All this they reduced to writing. They did this in Palestine with one set of arguments and traditions (some time in the fourth century), and they did it also in Babylonia, with another and much

more elaborate set of arguments and traditions (early in the sixth century). The result in the latter case (the "Babylonian Talmud") is a huge compilation, equal, at a rough guess, to more than two volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Its contents defy analysis. It is an unconscious attempt to collate an entire national tradition—religious, legal, medical, magical, popular folk-lore, historical, imaginative, speculative and (though it is not easy to grasp the fact) even humorous. It might be said to contain virtually everything except an index.

And, of course, it contains some references to Christianity; but most astoundingly few. In the main the Jew had already begun the process which has characterized a great part of Judaism even to the present day—the process of slamming the door, and locking, barring and bolting his mind against the whole subject of Christianity.

What, then, do the Talmud references to Christianity amount to? But, first in logical order, we must try to grasp what, during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, was the attitude of Christianity to the Jews—for, if there is one point which arises clearly out of our subject of study, it is this: that Jews have always (and can we blame them?) based their notions of Christianity on the conduct of Christians.

"Antisemitism" is not a modern sentiment. It is true that the actual words "antisemitism," "antisemite," "antisemitic" are barely fifty years old; but the attitude of mind which they portray is older than Christianity. Ancient Greek and

Roman pagan writers seem to have provided almost the entire stock-in-trade of the modern abusers of the Jews. They described them as "hated of all other men," clannish, atheists and irreligious, said that they had never helped civilization, that they were a danger to the Roman Empire, that their bodies emitted a peculiar odour, that they sacrificed every year on their altar a specially fattened Greek, that they hated every other nationality, and that they were the descendants of lepers who had been driven out of Egypt. Cicero, Horace, Juvenal, Martial, Tacitus—all helped to add fuel to the popular feelings of dislike towards the Jews, who had spread over the length and breadth of the Empire long before the destruction of Jerusalem and the rise of Christianity.

When, therefore, Christianity arose and spread and added its own special measure of hatred against those who had crucified the Christian Messiah; and when Christianity, in the time of the Emperor Constantine, first became a tolerated and then the dominant religion of the Empire, we can easily understand the consequences for the Jews.

From the time of Constantine there was a continual stream of anti-Jewish legislation, and stronger anti-Jewish measures were frequently applied locally in special emergencies. Actually, in themselves, these anti-Jewish laws were not exceptionally or, some might even argue, unreasonably oppressive. Thus the first of the statutes of Constantine enacted that if the Jews should stone or endanger the life of a Jewish convert to Christianity, all concerned should

be burnt alive;[3] such a law merely met violence with violence. The second part of this statute prohibited Christians from becoming Jews. Another statute prohibited Jews from owning Christian slaves. Another civil law forced the Jews to undertake the burden of certain public offices whose incidental expenses had made them undesired positions of honour. In other respects the Jews had the full rights of Roman citizenship, and their religious leaders had the same privileges as the Christian clergy.[4]

Later, the Jews suffered severely in the way of special levies and taxation, as the direct results of anti-Christian outbreaks—mainly in Alexandria and Syria. We only know of these anti-Christian outbreaks from Christian sources.[5] We do not know what provoked them. Yet, knowing as we do the reputation of Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the ferocity of the Egyptian monks, and the murder of Hypatia, we can readily imagine what the treatment of the Jews must have been in moments when popular hysteria was let loose.

In Galilee the Jews had long possessed some semblances of self-government under their patriarch at Tiberias; but these rights were finally (in the fifth century) crushed out of existence.[6] Christian provocation constantly incited Jewish reprisals—in turn followed by severe, often vicious, penalties by the civil authorities.[7]

But, as may well be imagined, it is not the *substance* of laws that matters, so much as the atmosphere and the spirit in which they are carried out.

We must always admire the enthusiasm of the early Christian Church; but we would gladly forget much of their conduct not only towards the Jews, but even, at times, towards their fellow-Christians. The Christian leaders were only too ready on any occasion to appeal to mob ferocity. It is so much easier for mankind to revert to its savage instincts than to rise to the moral standard of the Sermon on the Mount; and it was so very much easier for the Christian leaders to acquire a reputation for religious zeal and influence by playing on mob passions and the spirit of vengeance against an already hated race, than to instil the spirit of forgiveness and to drive home the teaching of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Only too well can we understand that the Jews failed to see Jesus behind the ranks of His reputed followers.

Something can, of course, be said on the other side. "The clouds of ignorance and barbarism" then settling over the world "could not but spread a deeper gloom over the sullen national character of the Jews." The Church's manner of carrying on the contest was not calculated to reduce the bitterness of Jewish feeling. It was unlikely that "while the world around them was sinking fast into unsocial ferocity of manners, (the Jews alone) should acquire the gentleness and humanity of civilization."[8] Undeserved oppression (or even deserved oppression) does not make for sweet reasonableness in the victim. Whenever they could, the Jews always retaliated in kind; they seized every chance of siding with the enemies of the Church or the Christian Empire. In local quarrels during the long-pro-

tracted Arian controversy, the Jews were always in league with the Arians.[9] And when, shortly before the Mohammedan conquest, the Persian army penetrated into Syria and Palestine, it was the Jews who took the lead in the merciless massacres of the Christians and the utter destruction of the Christian Jerusalem.[10]

We, however, are more concerned with the Church's complete failure to show, whenever it was faced by the Jewish race, the faintest gleam of Christian feeling, or the least glow of the spirit of Jesus. Where Jesus Himself, and St. Stephen, forgave, the Church thought it right to avenge. In vain had St. Paul urged that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

I must leave this part of the subject. I have understated things; or at least I have neglected details. There are too many of them. Those who wish can easily learn them. They are quite accessible in English, either from the mouth of a Christian historian, Dean Milman, or from a Jewish writer, Graetz.

We come back to the point from which we started. What has the Talmud to say of Christianity?

There is very little; only scattered hints. These are, simply, parts of an imaginary picture drawn up by the Jews—an imaginary picture of the only kind of being who could, in their tortured minds, have inspired the horror which Christianity had proved itself to be to the Jews during the past three centuries. Also bear in mind that the Jews who produced these few and fragmentary elements which go to make up the imaginative Talmudic picture—these

Jews were Orientals, living fifteen hundred years and more ago, with highly developed powers of vituperation and few inducements to reticence. They also paid no regard to historical verisimilitude; the imaginary figure which they describe lived, apparently, both 100 B.C. and 100 A.D.[11]

Much of what is now to be quoted from the Talmud almost certainly did not refer to the Christian Founder at all; but later it was supposed to—partly owing to the malevolent scrutiny and the hyper-suspicion of the Christian censorship, and partly owing to the Jews themselves, once they were goaded into the frame of mind which could find no vilification too base to express their thoughts of all that concerned Christianity.

Here is the sum-total of all that the Talmud is *alleged* (sometimes rightly, but more often wrongly) to say of Christianity's Founder:

A certain Yeshu, called the Notsri, or the Son of Stada, or the Son of Pantera, was born out of wedlock. His mother was called Miriam. She was a women's hairdresser (the word here is *M'gadd'la*, a pun on the name Mary *Magdalen*). Her husband was Pappus, the son of Yehudah, and her paramour a Roman soldier, Pantera. She is said to have been the descendant of princes and rulers. This Yeshu had been to Egypt, whence he brought back the knowledge of many tricks of sorcery. He was just a sorcerer, and so deceived and led astray the people of Israel; he sinned and caused the multitude to sin. He made a mock of the words of the learned men and was excommunicated. He was tainted with heresy. He called himself God and said that he would go up

to heaven. He was tried before the Court at Lud on a charge of being a deceiver and teacher of apostasy. Evidence was procured against him by concealing witnesses to hear his statements, and a lamp was so placed that his face could be seen, but so that he could not see the witnesses. He was executed in Lud on the Eve of Passover, which fell on the eve of a Sabbath. During forty days a herald proclaimed that Yeshu was to be stoned, and evidence was invited in his favour, but none was forthcoming. He was stoned and hanged. Under the name of Balaam he was put to death by " Pinhas the Robber " (supposed to refer to Pontius Pilate). At the time he was thirty-three years old. He was punished in Gehenna by means of boiling scum. He was " near to the kingdom " (whatever that may mean). He had five disciples: Mattai, Naqai, Netser, Buni and Todah. Under the name of Balaam he was excluded from the world to come.[12]

That is all. Certainly to even the least devout Christian mind it is revolting in the extreme. But is it not really amazing that it is not worse—far worse? Think of what Christianity had meant to the Jews for long generations and centuries! Think again, in a different direction, of the verbosity of the huge Talmud, and its habit of piling, piling up everything it could think of about everything it discussed! Only think of that, and then we can only feel surprise that Christianity figures as a mere half-millionth fragment of the Talmud's interest; and odious though that half-millionth fragment is, the real matter for surprise is that it is not infinitely more disgusting! Compare it, for example, with

the mediæval vituperation against " Mahomet and the paynims " and the Talmud seems by comparison almost a model of restraint.

At the time of its compilation long generations of intense, bitter hatred between Jew and Christian had been lived through. The Jews repaid Christian hatred to the utmost that lay in their power—except that the hatred which, on the Christian side, found its vent in acts of merciless massacre, on the Jewish side (since the Jews were few and feeble) mostly evaporated in idle curses. The worst that we find in the Talmud about Christianity need not surprise us.

Unfortunately this does not by any means take us to the full depth of degradation into which Christianity was to sink in the Jewish conception. Christianity was to show itself a still more bitter persecutor of the Jewish race—always priming itself for such persecution, if you please, by appealing to the memory of its Founder. The miserable fact emerges that it was always the staunchest fighters for Christendom who were the bitterest persecutors.

I must pass as rapidly as possible over the next eight or nine centuries. This it is easy to do because of the sheer monotony of the picture.

In the East Islam had conquered; and almost without exception this meant comparative security for its Jewish subjects. They might be reduced to a position of social inferiority; but so were the Christians under Moslem rule.

In the West the Church was all powerful. It dominated religious and, to a great extent, civil life as well. Where the Church was strongest, there Jewish life was most perilous. By the seventh

century Spain had already taken the lead in Jewish persecution, and it was to retain this odious distinction (such time as it had the power) to the end of the fifteenth century. These are the sort of laws we find passed in the Synods of the Church and ratified by the State. The titles are enough :

" Laws concerning the promulgation and ratification of statutes against Jewish wickedness and for the general extirpation of Jewish errors. That the Jews may not celebrate the Passover according to their usage; that the Jews may not contract marriage according to their own customs; that the Jews may not practise circumcision; that the Jews shall make no distinction of meats; that the Jews bring no action against Christians; of the time when their converted descendants are admissible as witnesses; of the penalties attached to the transgressions of these statutes by the Jews; " and so forth.[13]

The penalty for these offences was even more extraordinary than the offences themselves : the criminal was to be stoned to death, or burnt, by the hands of his own people.

Moslem conquest soon threatened Spain. The nearer it came the worse became the troubles of the Jews. It was now, it is interesting to learn, that there started the famous fable of the Jewish conspiracy against the civilized world, known to our generation as " The Protocols of the Elders of Zion " (now duly translated into Arabic for the edification of the Palestinians). It was at the Council of Toledo, in 695, that the Gothic king, Egica, announced the discovery : " Already," he states, " already this people, defiled by the blood of Christ and

infamous for the profanation of their oaths, have meditated ruin against the king and kingdom; proclaiming that their time is come, they have begun the work of slaughter against the Christians." [14]

It really was believed that there was a vast Jewish confederacy throughout the entire Mediterranean world to exterminate the Christian faith. Laws were promptly passed to confiscate all the property of the Jews, to disperse them as slaves throughout the country, to seize all their children under seven, to bring them up as Christians, marry them to Christians, and so wipe out for ever the practice of the Jewish faith. Yet still the Jews survived.

After the Moslem conquest of Spain the centre of gravity of Christian effort passed to France. France followed Spain's lead, but not with such consummate efficiency, for the simple reason that the Church was not so powerful. But what the leading bishops could do they did. Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, is the leading figure. It is worth noticing that he introduced the practice of Christian scrutiny of the Talmud as a stick with which to beat the Jews. This was early in the ninth century. Archbishop Agobard was, it must be confessed, one of the most enlightened Christians of his age; but listen to his opinion of the Jews:

He calls upon his fellow-bishops to co-operate with him in separating the Christians from a people who, he says, "are clothed with cursing as with a garment. The curse penetrates into their bones, their marrow, and their entrails, as water and oil flow through the human body. They are accursed in the city and in the country, in their births and in their deaths;

their flocks, their meat, their granaries, their cellars, their magazines are accursed ! " [15]

And so we might go on and on with the miserable panorama. It is only varied by becoming at times considerably worse. Among the Moslems the Jews had peace and prospered. But Christianity meant to them the extremity of savagery and barbarism. The high-water mark was reached when Christian chivalry set out on the Crusades.

It is quite impossible to go into details. Wherever the Crusaders passed through France and the Rhine Valley on their way to the Holy Land they found an easy and profitable way of tasting the first-fruits of Christian conquest over the infidel. " How can we," they said, " how can we go to the Holy Land to free it from the infidels while we leave worse infidels behind us, those who crucified our Saviour ! " I am glad that time does not allow me to describe what happened. The acts were those of a fanatic mob in the extreme stages of religious intoxication. We can imagine the terrible cry of *Hep* (supposed to stand for the initial letters of *Hierosolyma est perdita*, Jerusalem is fallen)—this cry of *Hep*, the signal for the massacre of the Jews, running through the cities of the Rhine with frightful results.[16] It happened in the first, the second, and to a less degree in the third Crusade : the blood of the Jew was as conspicuous a mark of the Crusader as the cross on his breast.

Fortunately, it is not my purpose to give a history of these times : my sole purpose is to show what Jews have thought of Christianity, and, especially, *Why !*

I have gone into the story of the times at such length simply to prepare you for the mediæval popular Jewish idea of Christianity. We need not be surprised (and we have no right to complain) however bad that idea should turn out to be.

Once more the Jewish popular mind drew up its own imaginary picture of the Founder of Christianity and His life. It based this on the imaginary details already contained (and obviously gloated over) in the Talmud. These details it amplified and adorned with everything which Jewish contempt and loathing could think of, to the discredit of Christianity. The result is known under various titles : " The History of Yeshu," " The Story of him who was hanged," " The Story of that one and his son," and the like.[17] It is an unseemly relic of ancient times, a pitiful device by which the tortured imaginations of the Jews revenged themselves on the Christians. But, with all this, we must remember that whatever discredit it brings upon those who concocted it, it brings in every one of its disgusting details an even greater, a much greater, discredit upon those whose cruelty provoked it.

You will recognize in the course of the summary which I am about to give, that it is mainly a perversion and caricature of a few half-heard details from the Gospels. Here are the outlines of the story : details it is quite impossible to give.

Johanan, a pious youth of Jerusalem, is betrothed to Miriam, the daughter of a Bethlehem widow. Joseph Pantera, of the tribe of Judah, forms a plan to seduce Miriam and effects his purpose one Sabbath eve. Three months afterwards the pious Johanan

realizes what has happened and suspects Joseph Pantera; but having no proof he deserts Miriam and flees to Babylonia. In course of time Miriam bears a son who is called Yeshu. The boy is placed under the tuition of a learned Rabbi, yet by his very conduct, which is disrespectful to the sacredness of Jewish tradition, he makes the Rabbis suspect his birth. Yeshu is expelled from the community. He first went to Upper Galilee, and thence to Jerusalem, where he contrived to learn in the Temple the secret of the sacred Name of God, and with the help of this he was able to work miracles. The leaders of the Jews, becoming alarmed at his unprincipled behaviour, set up one of themselves as a rival magician. This rival was called Judas. The priests allowed Judas to learn the sacred name so that he too could work miracles; they arranged a trial of strength between him and Yeshu, in which the latter was defeated. Yeshu was condemned to death but managed to escape. Judas followed him, disguised as one of his disciples, and contrived to steal from him the parchment on which Yeshu had written the sacred name and which he kept hidden in a cut in his flesh. Yeshu, in order to learn the name once more, went again to Jerusalem. There Judas betrayed him to the rulers. He was captured, scourged, stoned, and hanged—upon the stalk of a cabbage, because no tree would consent to bear him. After he was dead, Judas stole the corpse and threw it into the ditch of his garden. The disciples not finding the body said that Yeshu had risen from the dead. Helena, who was then queen, believed them, and threatened the Jews with death.

The body, however, was discovered and dragged before the queen at the tail of a horse. The Christians were furious against the Jews; so one of the latter, by name Simon Kephas, undertook to make peace by completely separating the Christians from the Jews. He learned the sacred name, worked miracles, and having thus gained the confidence of Yeshu's followers, he gave them, in Yeshu's name, new laws of religion. They accepted his teaching. He then withdrew himself to a tower, specially built for him, where he remained till his death. After his death a new teacher arose in Rome and set aside the laws given by Simon Kephas, and gave new ones, instituting baptism instead of circumcision, and Sunday instead of the Sabbath. The new teacher, however, in trying to perform a miracle, was killed by a stone falling upon his head. "So," the document ends, "so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord."

Naturally it was long before such a story as this found its way into print. But there is plenty of evidence showing how widespread it was throughout the Middle Ages, from the sixth century onwards. There are several versions of it, all delighting in the most odious details, all mixed up with wonder-stories and low comedy and word-play, which Jewish wit then, as now, takes great delight in.

An apology must be offered for suffering such things to reach Christian ears. But they have to be reckoned with as an essential element in Jewish mediæval thought, and even belief, about Christian origins. Furthermore, what is most important in our present study, they are a *formative element* in

the general " make-up " of the present-day Jewish mind—at least of those Jews who are still only a generation removed from the atmosphere of purely Jewish thought. It is quite true that many, or most, Westernized Jews are quite ignorant of this document in question. A short time ago a professor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem alleged that it was only recently that he came to know that there was such a book in existence; but he confessed that he had known its contents from his very earliest years.

And there we have the main point. All through the centuries the Jews have cherished these scurrilous details. Whether they were true or not did not matter: they were a highly treasured, private form of vengeance in return for the attitude of the Christians towards the Jews. They could not retort by physical means, but they did retort in this even more effective way, by reducing, within their own Jewish circles, Christianity and its Founder to contempt and ridicule. We learn that the Jews of Eastern Europe till quite recently used to celebrate Christmas by reading aloud this horrid caricature in their family circles.

In all this, how can we dare to insist that blame rests solely or even mainly upon the Jews? In utter shame I have been compelled to slur over quickly the glaring, appalling, abhorrent details of official Christendom's treatment of those, our Lord's brethren according to the flesh. Our Lord's charter to His Church was, " Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Whatever success has followed the progress of the Church

throughout the world in spreading the Gospel, however great its service in spreading the spiritual light of Christianity throughout the dark places of the world, we have to set on the other side of the scale the dead weight of the criminal conduct of the Church in its failure to follow even the least of its Lord's commands, whenever it was brought face to face with the scattered Jewish race. It might even seem that God has permitted the Jewish race to persist as a permanent reproach to Christianity: a glaring reproach of Christianity's failure.

We may not free ourselves of blame and think that it was only a failure of the Church in the past. The Christian Church, the body of Christ, is one: in time and in space. The sins of the past must either be borne by us or be repented of by us. The effects of those past sins still continue. *How* we can best repent of those past sins of the Church and *how* we can receive God's pardon for them, that, in our perplexity, must be the substance of our most penitent prayers.

One thing, however, we can know of a surety, that if we would remove the reproach of the past, then we must realize our failure as a Church to show forth the spirit of our blessed Lord and Saviour in just those times and places where it might have worked the greatest power.

So far as the Jews are concerned, let us not deceive ourselves for one moment: the Church, by its deliberate choice and conduct, has made itself one gigantic and seemingly impenetrable obstacle between them and the figure of our blessed Lord.

## III

## FROM THE CRUSADES TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the preceding lectures we have seen what was the Jewish attitude to Christianity from the first century to the time of the Crusades. Christianity was first a sect within Judaism; in the earliest stages neither Christianity nor its Founder met with extreme hostility. But the teaching of St. Paul as to the non-necessity of the Jewish Law, or, rather, its abrogation in the Christian scheme of things—this caused Christianity to be ostracized by official Judaism, while the Jewish revolt against Rome finally severed the Jewish members of the Christian Church from their Jewish origins and their allegiance to the Jewish nation. In the course of the next five centuries, with Christianity dominant in the Roman Empire, Christian enthusiasm found an outlet in persistent Jewish persecution, ranging from harassing legal inconveniences to acts of passionate mob violence. Even in the pre-Christian Roman Empire the Jews had been a hated race: Christianity intensified this hatred and, as its peculiar contribution, added the element of religious vengeance under the guise of Christian piety.

The direct or indirect effects of this treatment we find reflected in the real and supposed references to Christianity in the Talmud. These references amount to no more than perversions of half-understood details in the Gospels. They are far from being a cause of horror at the depravity of the Jewish mind: their altogether astonishing scarcity ought rather to be a reason for surprise at Jewish restraint. Still, it would be wrong to crown the Jews prematurely with a halo of—suppose we call it Christian charity and forbearance! The final form of the Talmud took shape in Babylonia, where its compilers were under Persian rule. Christianity was not prominent in their lives: it was just an inconspicuous contemporary, sharing equally with the Jews in whatever measures of State persecution were launched from time to time by the Persian rulers. Also, the Jews had already adopted the plan which they later found to serve their interests best—closing their minds entirely to the whole subject of Christianity.

After the rise of Islam the Jews had comparative peace in the East; but this was more than counterbalanced by their sufferings in the West, where the Church for some centuries was all-powerful over souls and bodies. First Spain, then France, became centres of highly concentrated anti-Jewish policy. To the Jews, the Christian leaders must have appeared the symbol of intolerance and cruelty, and the Christian rank and file as the embodiment of savagery and barbarity. This barbarity, always in the guise of pious Christian enthusiasm, reached its height in the Crusades.

The Jews, utterly incapable of retorting physically in kind, retorted in the only way that remained open to them—the rendering of Christianity ridiculous and contemptible within their own circles. Thus arose that mediæval Jewish legend, giving a grotesque, unseemly and, from the Christian point of view, blasphemous account of the Christian Saviour and the early days of Christianity. This legend—a puerile, imaginative bogey-story, perverting the Gospel narratives, making what was good in them odious, and transforming the traitor Judas into a national Jewish hero—this legend played its part in mediæval thought; and although most modern Jews are ignorant of it as an anti-Christian document, its poison has, to an indeterminate extent, become a formative element in the conscious or unconscious attitude of Judaism towards Christianity.

Going back a little, there is a somewhat brighter picture to be painted of the days in Spain which saw the close of the Moslem occupation and the gradual revival of Christian power. The Jews look back to these centuries of their existence in Spain as the golden age of Judaism. They were tolerated, allowed to acquire landed property, and to conduct their own affairs; they became wealthy, respected; they were the chief representatives of the learning and science of the day. As a little side-picture it is worth recording how a certain Jewish philosopher and poet, Solomon Ibn Gabirol (*d.* 1070), gained a great reputation amongst the Christian philosophers of the succeeding generations—among those who

created the mediæval scholastic system of philosophy. Thus Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, all busied themselves with the writings of this Solomon Ibn Gabirol. But they did not know that he was a Jew: they refer to him as "a certain Arab Avicebron" or "Avicebrol"; and they seem doubtful whether he were not, in fact, a Christian.[1]

The few Jewish references to Christianity which we meet at this period reflect the atmosphere of peace and toleration in which the Jews were living. These opinions are, uniformly, gravely argued, restrained and appreciative of the good in Christianity. As might be expected, they dispute on philosophical grounds such Christian doctrines as the divinity of Christ, and the Holy Trinity; yet they are without rancour and bitterness. Such, for example, is the case with the great Jewish teacher Sa'adiah, the translator of and commentator on the Arabic Bible.[2] Again, the famous Jewish poet, Judah ha-Levi (*d.* 1140), hails Christianity as sharing the same root with Judaism, and considers that it is one of the preparatory steps towards the time of Messianic bliss, in which it, Christianity, will have a share.[3] Another Jewish figure, greater than either of these two, namely, Maimonides, the Jewish physician of Saladin, recognizes Christianity as fulfilling the divine purpose of preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah; for, he says, it has spread the words of the Scriptures and the law of truth over the wide world.[4] Following Maimonides, the rabbinical authorities all sharply differentiate Christianity from what were, in Jewish eyes, idolatrous faiths: Christians were to

be regarded as "proselytes of the gate," that is, near akin in beliefs, although merely Gentiles.

Unfortunately, as Christianity more and more recovered from the shock of the Moslem conquests in Europe, the Jews once again came into their old heritage of hatred and contempt. Spain again was to take the lead.

It is also about this stage that the wealth of many of the Jews began to be such an exasperation to their Christian neighbours. Under the feudal system the Jews were regarded as so many cattle, attached to the soil, and the personal property of this or that baron—who found their money-producing qualities extremely helpful. The Jews, as the only purveyors of ready money, were, in turn, patronized and protected by kings and princes, who constantly had need of them; and, in turn, robbed and denounced as blood-sucking parasites and hateful usurers whenever Gentile indebtedness to them threatened to be embarrassing. And so it is that, for continuous centuries, we find decree after decree issued by rulers throughout Europe annulling interest on debts owed to Jews—or, as often as not, confiscating the debts for the benefit of the royal treasuries and driving the Jews out of the country. At need it was always possible in this way for a Christian king, actuated by religious motives, to wreak vengeance on the enemies of Christ. Thus we find the French king, St. Louis, in 1234, issuing a statute stating that "for the welfare of his soul and the souls of his father and all his ancestors, he annulled one third of all debts due to Jews." [5]

To read the history of the Jews in Europe during these centuries is one of the most monotonously depressing things imaginable. There is scarcely a ray of relief. The great religious orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans, had arisen; but never a leader do we find who, in the spirit of St. Francis, should preach the love of God over *all* His works—even over the Jews. The widespread pestilence, known as the "Black Death," appeared and reappeared during the fourteenth century. Throughout France, Spain and Germany came the same outcry: it was the Jews who had been poisoning the wells. How otherwise should the Christians die by the scores of thousands while the Jews seemed to remain immune? Widespread massacres of Jews followed. But then we should remember that, in Italy, at an earlier date, some poor Jews were even executed because of an earthquake.[6]

The venerable charge against the Jews, of killing a Christian child in order to use its blood for the Passover ritual—this was asserted and repeated in every Christian country where Jews were to be found. This horrid charge, even more absurd than horrid, has been brought against Jews—and men have always been found to believe its truth—since pre-Christian times even to the present day (it was revived in Lithuania last year; it was heard in Port Said five years ago, and it was even hinted at in Jerusalem shortly afterwards). It is one of the curiosities of history; but it has had fatal consequences for the Jews; for nothing has so served to perpetuate and exasperate anti-Jewish feelings

among simpler-minded Christians as this charge. Our own English saints, St. Hugh of Lincoln and St. William of Norwich, serve to remind us that the Jews have suffered the same calumny even in England's " green and pleasant land." Some of you will remember how Chaucer, in the Prioress's Tale, has embalmed the legend in an only too exquisitely pathetic setting.

The revival of the Church's power in Spain spelled all manner of miscellaneous oppressive methods against the now wealthy Jews. Thousands found it easier to accept the form of baptism and so retain their wealth and security while remaining Jews at heart. This leads us to the final terrible closing scenes of Christian and Jewish relations in Spain. These nominal Jewish-Christians, or Crypto-Jews, or New Christians, or Marranos, as they were variously called, were suspected of secretly judaizing. The clergy of Spain called in the help of the Inquisition. This was in 1480.

Those of us who belong to the Reformed Churches think of the Inquisition solely as a weapon in the hands of the unreformed Church against Protestants. But to the Jewish mind the Inquisition was primarily aimed against the Jews—against those scores of thousands of them who had accepted the form of baptism under compulsion while remaining Jews at heart. And bitterly did those Jews suffer. Details need not be given. The fact remains that with the Jew of to-day, far more than with the most perfervidly imaginative Protestant, the Inquisition has burnt itself into his inmost being as the worst of

horrors conceivable, the most hideous nightmare in his national past. Till one has grasped this fact, it is strange to notice how promptly and persistently this idea comes up to-day from Jewish lips and Jewish pens: "Inkvisitzia" and Torquemada are to them the commonest terms of comparison whenever they would describe oppression; they are commoner even than "Czarist Russia."

Twelve years later, 1492, saw the whole body of Jews hounded out of Spain, 300,000 in number. The horrors and sufferings were unspeakable. And it was all done in the name of Holy Mother Church.

Covering this period, up to the end of the fifteenth century, there is little we can lay hold of for the subject of these lectures: namely, the expression of Jewish thought about Christianity outside ordinary controversy. We can without the least difficulty suppose that the Jews found no reason to change the libellous, blasphemous notions about the origins of Christianity which had done duty for centuries past. We are, in fact, able to trace a new and more bitterly-worded recension of the mediæval "History of Yeshu" stories, specially adapted to the mentality of the Jews of the later Middle Ages. In Spain and France there were many public disputations between Christians and Jews; but these were nothing more than verbal tournaments, turning on artificial interpretations of Scripture for the most part.

Yet it is from a Spanish Jew at the end of the fifteenth century that we have a judgment on Christianity which, you will agree, is well worth recording. It is the opinion of a strictly orthodox Jew, Joseph Yaabetz by name, one of the victims of the expul-

sion of 1492. He records with gratitude the work of Christianity as teaching a belief in the one Divine Creator, in divine revelation, retribution for sin, and the resurrection. He goes so far as to say (and he says it without the cynicism which one would suspect, not unreasonably, to be behind it), that "but for the example of these Christian nations we might ourselves have become infirm in our faith during our long dispersion." [7]

This is, indeed, heaping "coals of fire." In the circumstances I think it would be difficult to find a more exact fulfilment of St. Paul's prescription of Christian charity: "Charity suffereth long and is kind . . . is not provoked, taketh no account of evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth."

The beginning of the sixteenth century marks a great change. It is the dawn of the Reformation; it is immediately after the invention of printing; the centre of gravity of Jewish life in Europe is now in Germany; the feudal system is either forgotten or a powerless form; the Church's power is still immense, but it has to cope with difficult matters of purely mundane state-craft, in which religion as often as not served only as a pawn in a diplomatic game.

With the Reformation we instinctively associate a new interest in the Scriptures. With this new interest came the first widely expressed desire to know the originals—the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. In this connection we at once think of Erasmus. But there was a greater man than Erasmus, one whose name is

known to comparatively few—one who took the lead in introducing the study of Greek and Hebrew to the students of Europe. This was *John Reuchlin*.[8]

In searching out the many and various causes and streams of thought which culminated in the Reformation, it is strange to find that by no means one of the least prominent was the Talmud—this much-abhorred Jewish Talmud.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century a strong anti-Jewish campaign was launched by the Dominicans of Cologne, headed by their Prior, Jacob van Hoogstraten. Hoogstraten seems to have aimed at securing for the Dominicans in Germany the same powerful position which they held in Spain owing to the Inquisition. The Dominicans secured the services of a converted Jew, Joseph Pfefferkorn.[9] Pfefferkorn, at the instance of his Dominican patrons, wrote a series of pamphlets exhorting the Jews to embrace Christianity; but the *principal* aim in the pamphlets was to persuade the Christian world that all Jewish writings were written in a tone bitterly hostile to Christianity, and that these writings, the Talmud first and foremost, should be destroyed wholesale and utterly, as pernicious blasphemies.

The Dominicans brought influence to bear on the Emperor, Maximilian. He ordered that all Jewish writings (except the Old Testament) should be destroyed throughout the whole of Germany. To the converted Jew, Pfefferkorn, he gave authority to carry out the necessary searches in the synagogues and private houses of the Jews. This was in the year 1509. The Jews were forced to hand over to him every book they possessed.

But the Jews were now no longer the helpless sheep of earlier centuries. They protested, and through the intervention of the Archbishop of Cologne, the actual destruction of the confiscated books was delayed, and the Emperor was persuaded that it would be more just to have the books first of all scrutinized by experts, who should examine into the truth of the wholesale and very serious charges brought by Pfefferkorn.

John Reuchlin was the expert chosen. He was the only Christian in Germany, possibly even in all Europe, who knew Hebrew well enough to report on the nature of the vast post-biblical Hebrew literature.

Meanwhile the intense anti-Jewish propaganda of the Dominicans, the stream of pamphlets, in both German and Latin, turned out from the printing press—served to rouse popular feelings to an unusual pitch. Those feelings became more exasperated and embittered by a charge, brought against the Jews in the Brandenburg district, of stealing and desecrating the consecrated Eucharistic wafers, and of killing a Christian child for the purposes of the Passover ritual. These charges were taken as proved, and thirty Jews were burnt in Berlin. It was at this stage that John Reuchlin drew up his report: "Whether it was godly, laudable and advantageous to Christianity to burn the Jewish writings, especially the Talmud."

He decided (as, of course, any unprejudiced person was bound to decide) that to condemn all Jewish writings indiscriminately would be foolish. He divided them into six categories; of these he considered that there should be destroyed only those

deliberate perversions of the Gospels and the puerile fables known as the "History of Yeshu." As for the rest, they ought to be preserved in the interests of science and true learning and for the promotion of a sound knowledge of the Scriptures.

It was a very brave act. Reuchlin dared to put forward this view in the teeth of the most powerful element in the Church, and in the teeth of popular prejudice at a moment when anti-Jewish feeling was at its maximum.

Reuchlin went even further: he argued that the Jews were citizens of the Holy Roman Empire, and as such were entitled to its full privileges and protection; also, since the Jews stood outside the Roman Church and were not bound to hold the Christian faith, the Roman Church could therefore have no jurisdiction over them, whether over their bodies or their minds.

Reuchlin sent his report to the Archbishop of Cologne. It was intercepted and opened by the Dominicans. Pfefferkorn promptly drafted an answer and a rebuttal. This the Dominicans published in German and circulated widely. In it they openly denounced Reuchlin as a heretic. What made Reuchlin most indignant was that they alleged that he was in the pay of the Jews and that he did not really know Hebrew, and that he was the instrument of Satan.

It is not easy to picture to ourselves the sensation stirred up by this pamphlet, the "Handspiegel," Pfefferkorn's attack on Reuchlin. It was circulated in thousands of copies. Since the invention of printing this was the first attack on a highly placed

dignitary of the State, such as was Reuchlin. It was the first printed libel. Being written in German everyone could understand it. Reuchlin was forced to answer publicly in a counter-pamphlet and to make the Talmud a personal question, and—a veritable landmark in history—he was compelled openly to defend the Jews. As for his opponent, Pfefferkorn, the accuser of the Jews, Reuchlin publicly branded *him* as a scandalmongering liar.

Well might the Jews of the day rub their eyes and ask whether they were dreaming. A prominent Christian had publicly protected them and their writings and actually claimed that the Gospels taught that a Christian should treat even a Jew as his neighbour and love him as himself!

The controversy waged for another ten years. Around Reuchlin were ranked all the humanists of the day, Erasmus, Melancthon, Martin Luther—all those spirits who ushered in the continental Reformation. On the other side, behind Pfefferkorn, was the entire Dominican order (the Franciscans, it is curious to note, took Reuchlin's part) and the organized Church, struggling to maintain its authority against the new rush of modern learning and the plague of unsettling convictions which the new learning was stirring up.

In the end the Pope condemned Reuchlin on principle. But, none the less, the ten-year-old decree, ordering the destruction of the Talmud and other Hebrew writings, was not revived.

Reuchlin had aroused the interest of the Christian world in the Talmud and Jewish writings; it was a friendly interest and not the hostile interest which

alone had existed in the past. During his lifetime there were printed for the first time the Rabbinical Bible (that is, the Old Testament in Hebrew with Aramaic translation and garlands of Hebrew commentaries), and the Talmud in fifteen folio volumes. By the year 1543 the same printer had published altogether some eighty Jewish works, great and small. This printer, Daniel Bomberg of Antwerp, was a Christian.

Martin Luther, during the earlier part of his life, was a faithful and worthy pupil of Reuchlin. He too lifted his voice, in his blunt, outspoken, and sometimes crude way, to point out things which are so obviously true, but things which in those days had barely struck the consciences of mankind, and things which even in our own day are more often forgotten than remembered.

Luther's remarks are worth quoting at some length. They are as startling as they are sometimes crude.

"Those fools, the Papists, Bishops, sophists, monks, have formerly so dealt with Jews that every good Christian would have rather been a Jew. And if I had been a Jew and seen such stupidity and such blockheads reign in the Christian Church, I would rather be a pig than a Christian. They have treated the Jews as if they were dogs, not men, and as if they were fit for nothing but to be reviled; whereas they are blood-relations of our Lord; therefore if we respect flesh and blood, the *Jews* belong to Christ more than do *we*. I beg therefore, my dear Papists, if you become tired of abusing me as a heretic, that you begin to revile me as a Jew.

"Therefore," he goes on to say, "it is my advice that we should treat them humanely; but now we drive them by force, treating them deceitfully and ignominiously, saying they must have Christian blood to wash away the Jewish stain, and I know not what more nonsense. Also we prohibit them from working amongst us, from living and having social intercourse with us, forcing them, if they would remain with us, to become usurers. If we would help them, then must we exercise, not the law of the Pope, but that of Christian love. We must receive them kindly and allow them to compete with us in earning a livelihood, so that they may have an opportunity to witness Christian life and doctrine; and if some remain obstinate, what of it? Not every one of us is a good Christian." [10]

Elsewhere Luther speaks of the Jews as the instruments of God's revelation to man: "The Jews are of the best blood on earth;" "through them alone the Holy Spirit wished to give all the books of Holy Scripture to the world. *They* are the *children*, and we are the guests and strangers. Indeed, like the Canaanitish woman, we should be satisfied to be the dogs that eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table." [11]

And yet in his later years Luther became the bitterest enemy of the Jews. His terrific vocabulary and force of language were turned against instead of for the Jews. This is what we now find him saying:

"Doubt not, beloved in Christ, that after the devil you have no more bitter, venomous, violent enemy than the real Jew." As to what should be done

with the Jews, Luther recommends: "Burn their synagogues and schools; what will not burn, bury with earth, that neither stone nor rubbish remain. In like manner, break into and destroy their houses. Take away all their prayer-books and Talmuds, in which is nothing but godlessness, lies, cursing and swearing. Forbid their Rabbis to teach on pain of life and limb." [12]

After admonishing his hearers not to have the slightest intercourse with the Jews, he says: "If that which you already suffer from the Jew is not sufficient, strike him in the jaw . . . if I had power over them I would assemble their most prominent men and demand that they *prove* that we Christians do not worship the one God, under the penalty of having their tongues torn out through the backs of their necks." [13]

This radical change of heart in so great a man, this lapse from Christian charity to the grossest intemperance, should make us pause and take very careful thought. Luther may have been disappointed by the Jews; he is supposed to have suspected a Jewish attempt to poison him; all manner of explanations have been offered to account for so radical a change. But primarily the change goes to show this: that, even in the case of so great a Christian as Luther, it needed only the removal of certain inhibitions, it needed only the slackening of certain controls exercised over mankind by the due practice of the Christian virtues of humble-mindedness, love and obedience to our Lord and Master, and the open-eyed facing of truth—it needed only

the slackening of these, the hardly acquired Christian virtues, and once these controls falter or slacken, for whatever reason, then at once, the age-long, inbred, instinctive Jew-hatred breaks loose. Centuries of Christianity of a kind have made it a Christian instinct to loathe the Jew; to overcome that implanted instinct has now become one of the severest disciplines in the practice of the Christian life.

In pursuing the subject of these addresses it is possible to pick out only a few illustrative episodes. The field of Jewish history is so huge—being virtually a complete survey of world-history wherever the Jew enters into the picture; and there are few countries and times in which Jews have not figured. I have tried to limit the choice to episodes which in themselves each marked the beginning of a new phase in Christian-Jewish relations. Once such a new phase is begun, usually it becomes continuous, lasting in many cases even to modern times—just as the blood-accusation libel, which first took precise form in Norwich, in the thirteenth century, continues to be charged against the Jews to the present day, and is even becoming more frequent. This sense of continuity in the quality of Christian-Jewish relations is constantly being aroused in most curious fashion.

For the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries I would draw your attention to three Christians who have influenced these relations: the influence of one was bad, though he meant well; a second had an influence which was thoroughly pernicious; while the influence of the third was thoroughly good.

John Christopher Wagenseil was an industrious Christian Hebraist who exerted all his energies in collecting Jewish works controverting Christian doctrines or attacking Christianity in cruder style. This collection he published in 1681, under the highly intriguing title *Tela ignea Satanæ*—the fiery darts of the devil. His intention was quite without malice. He hoped to persuade the leaders of the Church that it was their duty to take an oath from all Jews that they would utter no word of mockery against Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the Cross and the Christian Sacraments. Incidentally he emphasized his belief that it was wrong to " scorch and burn the Jews, to rob them of all their property, or to drive them with their wives and families out of the country."

Wagenseil wrote also a pamphlet exposing the falsehood of the popular belief that the Jews used the blood of Christians. " It might," he says, " indeed pass if the matter stopped with idle gossip; but that on account of this execrable falsehood the Jews have been tormented, punished and executed by thousands, should move even stones to compassion and make them cry out." [14]

Wagenseil was, however, followed by John Andrew Eisenmenger.[15] He compiled (in the year 1700) a malicious book whose title well describes its contents. This is it:

" Judaism exposed: or an original and true account of the way in which the stubborn Jews frightfully blaspheme and dishonour the Holy Trinity, revile the Holy Mother of Christ, mockingly

criticize the New Testament, the Evangelists, the Apostles and the Christian religion, and despise and curse to the uttermost extreme the whole of Christianity. At the same time much else besides, either not at all or very little known, and gross errors of the Jewish religion and theology, as well as ridiculous and amusing stories, herein appear. All proved from their own books. Written for the honest information of all Christians."

Eisenmenger's purpose was to hurl back Wagenseil's "Fiery darts of the devil" with deadly aim against the Jews themselves. Furthermore, all that other material about alleged Jewish abominations, which Wagenseil had collected and exposed as falsehoods—all these Eisenmenger refurbished and presented as indisputable facts. For example, he gave lengthy proofs that Jews were forbidden to save a Christian from death; he repeated all the stories of murders of Christians by Jews, of the poisoning of wells by Jews in the time of the Black Death, the ritual murders—in fact, everything which had ever been alleged against the Jews, whether through simple ignorance, deliberate fraud or excited fanaticism.

By heavy bribery the Jews succeeded in delaying the publication of this work. But it was ultimately published after Eisenmenger's death. It has ever since proved an inexhaustible armoury for malicious opponents of the Jews. The name of Eisenmenger is burnt deep into the suffering soul of the Jew.

Altogether admirable, however, is the figure of William Surenhuysius,[16] a Christian scholar of Amsterdam. After years of labour he produced

between 1698 and 1703 a Latin translation with commentaries of the entire Mishnah. He desired that Christian youths training for theology and the ministry of the Church should not devote themselves to the seductions of classical literature, but by engaging in the study of the Mishnah serve, as it were, a sacred noviciate :

" He who desires to be a good and worthy disciple of Christ must either first become a Jew, or first learn thoroughly the language and culture of the Jews, and become Moses' disciple before he joins the Apostles, in order that he may be able through Moses and the Prophets to convince men that Jesus is the Messiah."

He was outspoken in his contempt for those who, like Eisenmenger, picked over Jewish writings with ulterior motives, like, he says, " highwaymen, who, after they have robbed an honest man of all his clothes, beat him to death with cudgels or send him away with scorn."

In all this I have almost entirely neglected to give the Jewish reaction—to show whether, or how, Jewish opinion of Christianity was affected by the post-Reformation attitude to the Jews. We are at once met by the remarkable fact that there is no such thing as a recognizable Jewish anti-Christian literature—that is to say, a literature in the least corresponding to the type represented by the gigantic bulk of Christian anti-Jewish (or, as it later came to be called, anti-Semitic) literature. All Wagenseil's efforts produced little more than that early Jewish parody of the Gospels, and Isaac of Troki's *Hizzuk Emunah*—the Protection of the Faith—and

the reports of one or two Christian Jewish public disputations. The Gospel parody may be put on one side as a thing standing by itself. The others are nothing more than philosophical arguments according to the fashion of the time and rival interpretations (and mostly very artificial interpretations) of Old Testament texts—the one side striving to show that the Messiah was come in the person of Jesus, the other side using just the same means and methods and materials to show that the Messiah had not come. But never a trace do we find of a Jewish work written in the spirit of Eisenmenger—with the specific object of rendering odious a religion and all who believe in it. You will agree that this is remarkable. It may be that Jews have wished to write such works, but feared for the consequences; but we have no right to take such a thing for granted.[16a] The Jews preferred, on the whole, to remain dumb. If they did break their rule of protective dumbness it was to point to something good in Christianity and Christians.

A very famous Talmudist and controversialist of the middle of the eighteenth century was Jacob Emden. This is what he finds himself able to say of Christianity:

"Christianity has been given as part of the Jewish religion by the Apostles to the Gentile world; and its Founder has even made the moral laws stricter than are those contained in the Mosaic law. There are, accordingly, many Christians of high qualities and excellent morals who keep from hatred and do harm to none, even to their enemies.

Would that Christians would all live in conformity with their precepts! They are not enjoined, like the Israelites, to observe the laws of Moses; nor do they sin if they associate other beings with God in worshipping a trinitarian Godhead. They will receive reward from God for having propagated a belief in Him among nations that never heard His name; for 'He looks into the heart.' Yea, many Christians have even gone forth to the rescue of *Jews* and their literature." [17]

This is, indeed, a valuable testimony. It is a tribute to the growth of a truer, Christ-like Christianity within the Church, a great tribute to the fearless work done by the few Christian leaders and rank and file who dared to fight down the age-long instinct which led Christians of all ages to loathe, despise and, wherever possible, harass and persecute the Jew; but it is, still more, a tribute to the great-mindedness of this Jew who was able to some extent to penetrate through the thick wall of intolerance and cruelty, savagery and barbarity which had interposed between the Church and Judaism.

We referred earlier to the "Golden Age" of the Jews in Spain. It was towards the close of that period that there took place some of the famous public disputations, staged by the rulers of the country between Christians and Jews, to argue the rival merits of the two religions. In one of these disputations we first hear of the story of the rings, found later in Boccaccio and used again with great effect by Lessing in his *Nathan the Wise*.[18] This is the story as it was first told by a Jew:

"In ancient days there lived a man who possessed a ring of gold beyond all price. It had within it a hidden virtue. It made him who wore it beloved of God and man. This man had two sons. He promised them that when he died he would give the ring to that one of his sons whom he loved best, and that son, by virtue of possessing the ring, should inherit all his father's goods. But he loved both his sons equally dearly. What then did he do? He called a skilful goldsmith who made a second ring so like the first that none could see a difference. On his death-bed the father gave a ring to each of his sons. What happened? Each claimed the father's estate. Each, knowing his father's love for himself, believed the other's ring to be false. They brought their case before the judge, 'I,' said the judge, 'cannot solve this riddle. Your father alone knew which of you he loved best; and he is not here to testify before me. This do. Each of you go your way, wear your ring; strive in all things to make yourselves beloved of God and man—the virtue which the true ring gives. Pass on the ring with the virtues which it claims to your children's children. Then, after a thousand thousand years, appear again before this judgment seat. A greater one than I shall then sit upon it. He shall decide between you.'"

## IV

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the three earlier lectures we have had glimpses of Christian-Jewish relations at characteristic times, in various centuries and in various parts of the world, and we have learnt the consequent Jewish sentiments about Christianity. To the Jews, Christianity, whenever it rose to activity, was too often an evil dream experienced in fact. To murder Jews even became a laudable Christian practice; to hate the Jew became a Christian virtue. Nothing, no matter how bad it is, that may be found in Jewish ideas about Christianity need surprise us: Jews had no reason to think otherwise than that Christian leadership spelled intolerance and cruelty, while the outstanding Christian virtue cultivated by the multitude seemed to be savage barbarity towards the Jew. That many thoughtful Jews did, in fact, penetrate through this thorn-hedge raised by the Christians, and found something of good in Christianity—that is a tribute rather to Jewish intelligence than to Christian practice.

Coming to the nineteenth century, there is a radical change to be noticed. This change is a complicated one. To understand it rightly we must realize the external factors which brought it about.

I. The first factor is this. The end of the eighteenth century saw the Jews at a low ebb politically and at an even lower ebb culturally. In the Middle Ages, and for long after, compared with the Christians the Jews were an educated people: with them, at least among their men-folk, literacy was the rule, and not as with Christians, the exception. In their controversies with Christians, and especially in their private dealings with Christians, the Jews must always have cherished a conviction of their own superiority; that they had not the tact to hide this feeling may, to some extent, explain Christian exasperation against them.

With the dawn of the nineteenth century the conditions were reversed. It was the Jews now who were examples of ignorance and superstition, and it was the Christians who had the monopoly of learning—who were hurrying forward and taking advantage of all the new developments in science and learning. Before, while suffering under political oppression, the Jew could always comfort himself by a feeling of his own moral and intellectual superiority. By the beginning of the nineteenth century he had quite lost this superiority. More and more the Jews had been cut off from the world: they were either confined to the ghettoes in the big towns of Western Europe, or segregated in towns and villages in Eastern Europe, where they became stagnant both intellectually and economically. Whenever any of them had the courage to look out from the narrow confines of their petty community life, it was to see a Christian world which, in material

and intellectual progress, left the Jew by comparison in the discomfort and obscurity of the Middle Ages. The Jews could only cultivate their old feeling of superiority by keeping their eyes rigidly turned inwards. Out of this lethargy the Jews, or some of them, were vigorously shaken by Moses Mendelssohn (the grandfather of Mendelssohn the musician).[1] By introducing his fellow-Jews to the German language and literature, Mendelssohn first showed them their defects and gave them the key to the totally new and strange territory of Western learning and thought.

II. The second factor in the changing situation was the gradual acquiring by the Jews in Western Europe of political rights. It was the era of "emancipation," freedom in the political, educational, social and religious sense. The ideals which had found an outlet in the American and French revolutions continued to work, and one effect of them was the removal of the political disabilities of Jews in France, Germany, England, Italy and some other parts of Europe.

This all led to a gradual change in Jewish life and mental habits. Formerly the Jew had the alternative either of leading a harassed, embittered, though sometimes profitable life in Christian surroundings, or of persuading himself that his own ghetto Jewish life, bound and hemmed in by the Talmud rules, was a higher, an all-sufficient life. Some there were, some there are still, convinced that this second is the true and altogether satisfying ideal for the Jew. But with the early decades of the nineteenth century the Jew was no longer *compelled* to lead the stunted life

of a social outcast in Christian circles, or reduced to persuading himself that life within the four walls of the Talmud was the ideal Jewish life. All life, learning and work now lay before him.

But *now* he was not, as in the Middle Ages, the teacher, the leader in civilization: he was a mere learner, a beginner.

III. The third factor to bring about a change in Jewish-Christian relations was a movement within Judaism—the so-called "Reform Judaism."

In its beginnings reform in Judaism, though obviously influenced by a reformed-Christianity environment, was not primarily moved by the principle called up by the Protestant Reformation in Christian history—the clearing away of centuries of practice and tradition in order to return to a simpler and supposedly purer form of the faith. The primary object in *Jewish* reform, the main object of its *first* promoters, was to fit Jews to take a part in the wider world that had opened around them in consequence of the removal of most political disabilities. Thus, first and foremost, the traditional laws must be relaxed which forbade Jews to have anything to do with the culture of the age or hindered them from taking the fullest share in the social and national activities, responsibilities and opportunities of the live world around them. A new interest was taken in the idea of Judaism as a religion (as opposed to a complex, hemmed-in life); stress came to be laid upon the orderliness and seemliness of divine worship—following the model of Christian Protestant Churches, synagogue

services were shortened, sermons and hymns were introduced in the vernacular, and much of the service itself was conducted in the everyday speech, instead of the rarely understood Hebrew. Subsequently far-reaching changes were introduced into the actual contents of Judaism. The Talmud and the *Shulchan Arukh* (the compendium of rules governing daily life, derived from the Talmud), though honoured as Jewish tradition, were no longer regarded as absolutely binding.

It is impossible to discuss all the stages of Reform Judaism. The gist of the matter is simply this: whereas the traditional orthodox Judaism claims to control the whole of a Jew—his nationality, his every habit, his secular thoughts and outlook, his family life, in fact his whole attitude to life—Reform Judaism, on the other hand, pleads that the "Judaism" of a Jew should affect only his *religious* life. There are degrees of Reform Judaism, from the comparatively conservative to the extreme left wing of liberalism; but they all agree in this, that "Judaism" is not to be bound up with Jewish nationality or culture: it is a religion only.

Such are the three factors dominating the change in Jewish-Christian relations in the nineteenth century: the Jew's realization of his cultural inferiority, his acquisition of political and social rights, and the stirrings of the Reform Judaism idea.

What were the results? They may be reduced in number to two: one intangible, the other most tangible.

The first is this. The more a person is conscious of his own imperfections the less likely is he to brood

overmuch upon the real, or supposed, imperfections in others; also, consciousness of one's own defects leads automatically to the recognition of others' merits. For eighteen centuries Christianity had used its physical superiority to crush Judaism: scarcely ever do we find it striving first and foremost to impress the moral beauty of Christianity upon the Jews. Therefore no blame attaches to the Jews if they failed to see any moral beauty in Christianity. But the Christian's appetite for persecution (at least throughout much of the world) ended with the dawn of the nineteenth century. The Jew, in most of Europe and in America, found himself accepted as a human brother and a fellow-citizen. He was free and highly willing to take what he wanted of the Christian civilization around him; and he was extremely quick to adapt himself to it. He was able to shed his protective crust of Jewish customs and anti-Christian prejudices. There even arose generations of Jews ignorant of the anti-Christian weapon forged by their fathers of old—the cherished idea that Christianity was a fiction based on shameless lies. They were willing to admit that Christianity was a movement of service to the world.

The second result is this. In itself it is a development grievously humiliating to Christians. But it is one for which Christians must feel a measure of gratitude. No longer did the Jews rest content to base their conclusions about Christianity on Christians. They had the good taste to forget, so far as they possibly could, the terrible scourge that Christianity had been to them in the past—to forget the acts of Christendom and to think rather of its ideals.

In short they turned their faces away from Christians and gave their attention to the person of the Founder of Christianity. This is humiliating to Christians, but we cannot say that the humiliation is undeserved.

I speak now, of course, only of those Jews who troubled their heads about the subject at all: the mass of the Jews never did. Orthodox Jewry has tried its utmost to close its mind against the whole subject of Christianity; though if the Jews lived (as most of them still did) under the more harassed conditions and in the unfriendly surroundings of Eastern Europe—in that case they could at need always find combined comfort and vengeance by cherishing in their heart of hearts the puerile mediæval Jewish fables about Christianity's origins. But their past memories and their present ideas of Christianity, and their ever-present dangers, convinced them that, in the face of the outer world, silence and the closed mind were their wisest policy.

But certain Jews there were who faced the subject of Christianity as an essential part of the world of thought in which they were at last permitted to roam at large. In a sense they were compelled to study the subject. They were influenced by the Reform Movement: in other words, Judaism had come with them to fulfil the duty of a *religion* only: it must meet their spiritual requirements. But though Judaism was to them no more than a religion, it was the religion which they openly professed. Therefore they must justify this preference, at least to themselves. Judaism and Christianity sprang from the same origins: they must closely resemble

each other. What prevented the Jews from going a step further in their course of reform and accepting that modification of Judaism contained in Christianity? They had to meet the challenge of such men as the learned Christian Hebraist, Franz Delitzsch, and prominent converts like Benjamin Disraeli, who insisted that Christianity *was* Judaism in a stage of higher and more cultivated development.

This period saw the conversion of large numbers of Jews in Germany. We need not follow Jewish writers who attribute these conversions one and all to worldly motives and personal ambition. There may have been such; but it is more reasonable to see the great movement of conversion in the nineteenth century as an outcome of the factors we have seen at work. Many of the Jews were at last able to see Christianity through glasses no longer smeared by the mud and fog of former Christian treatment of them; and they no longer felt the straining of a purely Jewish conscience or a purely racial bond binding them tightly to their forefathers. All the more then were the leaders of Jewish life compelled to face the problem of Judaism's claim, as a religion, to persist face to face with its daughter faith, Christianity.

It is proposed to discuss briefly the work of six prominent Jews who have dealt with the subject, namely, Joseph Salvador, a French Jew of independent mind; Abraham Geiger, a leading figure in the Reform Movement in Germany; Heinrich Graetz, a strong opponent of the Reform Movement; Joseph Jacobs, an English Jew of the Westernized orthodox type; Mr. Claude Montefiore, an English

Jew of the extreme Liberal camp; and "Ahad ha-Am," the philosopher of the Zionist Movement, and one who is held in great veneration by thoughtful Jews of to-day. These six represent almost every variety of nineteenth and early twentieth-century articulate Jewish opinion about Christianity. Their ideas also underlie all present-day Jewish opinion as well.

The first on our list, Joseph Salvador,[2] published in Paris, in 1838, two volumes entitled *Jesus Christ and His Teaching: a History of the Birth of the Church, its Organization and its Progress during the First Century.* He puts forward the idea which later Jews have seized upon with such avidity and emphasized so strongly—that Jesus never laid down *any* ethical precepts which did not already exist in the Old Testament or in the Judaism of the time. Thus he claims to find the entire Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, in the Apocrypha. If there was any difference between Jesus and the Pharisees, the established teachers of the time, it lay mainly in this: that whereas the Pharisees had an eye for society as a whole, for reality, the possibilities of human nature, the needs of the Jewish nation as a nation, the claim of man's happiness in this life, and what made for practical social reforms —Jesus, on the other hand, was concerned only with the religious and ethical life of the *individual.* The Pharisees looked to the preservation of the Jewish national integrity, to save it from fading into the surrounding nations, and being absorbed by them; the great aim of the Pharisees was to preserve the distinctive national characteristics, social and

secular, as well as religious and ethical—all of which were combined in the *Torah*, the divine Law given to Israel. The social and ceremonial elements served to protect and preserve the purely ethical and religious elements till the time should at last come when, through Israel's enlightened example and teaching, redemption should come to the whole world. Jesus, on the other hand, thought only of the religious and moral life of the individual; He thought nothing of the national Jewish needs, nor was it a matter of importance to Him whether the Jewish nation survived at all.

Salvador tried to show that Christianity was a compromise between Judaism and paganism, a compromise which had proved necessary in order to persuade the pagan world to accept Jewish ethical and religious teaching. Judaism, however, remained free from any such taint or admixture.

Although Salvador wrote nearly a hundred years ago, his arguments are still the mainstay of Jewish apologetics to-day. He anticipated most of the ideas which we shall find in his successors. At the time the book made a sensation in French Christian circles, but it was soon forgotten and exerted no direct influence on Jewish thought of the time.

Abraham Geiger was a learned Rabbi, one of the greatest figures among the Jews of Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1864 he published three lectures dealing with Jesus and His early disciples.[3] Geiger reduced the origin of Christianity to very mean proportions. He maintained that Jesus put forward no new idea of any kind, nor did His thoughts ever wander beyond the

range of His own people. Jesus did not teach anything contrary to the general principles already maintained by the Pharisees; like the rest of the Jews of those days he believed in the coming of a Messiah, with whom were bound up the hopes of deliverance from the tyranny of Rome. Jesus kept the ceremonial laws like every loyal Jew, but occasionally He belittled this or that observance if He thought it a hindrance rather than a help. But He never dreamed of putting an end to such laws on principle —as did St. Paul. Jesus praised the life of poverty and He taught a contempt of this world, and He disliked sharing this world's pleasures. But *this* was no opposition to Jewish teaching of the time; it was simply a frame of mind due to the depressed economical conditions of the Jews under Roman oppression.

Faced by the obvious problem: How could Christianity have arisen if Jesus taught no new idea?— Geiger thought it could be solved by supposing that Jesus' disciples believed that He was the Messiah, that they still believed this after He was killed, and from day to day looked forward to His return in glory, and felt the spiritual conviction that Jesus had risen again and would appear a second time.

That, Geiger thought, was all that there could possibly be known about the real historical origins of Christianity; and he thought that these things in themselves accounted for Christianity.

His conclusion as to the rival merits of Christianity and Judaism was that Christianity was a weakened, enervated form of Judaism, arising out of Judaism at a time when Judaism was passing through a sickly, enervated period. Christianity, this en-

feebled Judaism, only survived through its superstructure of belief about the second coming of Jesus. Judaism, on the other hand, had survived through the centuries of persecution, thereby proving its strength. Geiger saw it as a still developing plant destined to bring the ideals of universal justice before the world. He did not believe, with older orthodox Judaism, that the Talmud was the last word in the story of Judaism. He was not an extreme reformer (from the standpoint of modern Reform Judaism), but he hoped that a gradual process of evolution would enable the Jews to shed a great deal that was petrified and worthless in their lives and traditions.

It is, however, Heinrich Graetz[4] (*d.* 1894) who has done more than any other Jewish writer to instil into the ordinary average, Western Jew a working hypothesis of Christianity, not too difficult to understand, and one that preserved the self-respect of Jews. He was a violent opponent of the Reform Judaism movement. He admired his nation's traditions and gloried in his Jewishness. He was an industrious and widely read student. He had an independent mind. But chiefly he was possessed of powers of highly impassioned rhetoric. With these qualifications he wrote a *History of the Jews* from the earliest times till 1848. It is a great work. It is immensely popular in spite of its bulk. Most Jews consider it as authoritative and the last word on the subject. Its ideas have penetrated deeply into the consciousness of all Western Jews with any pretence to a modern education, be they orthodox or reformed, liberal or conservative.

Unfortunately it is long odds that if a so-called

" History " wins immense popularity, it cannot be very good history. So it is with Graetz. It is written with a passionate love and enthusiasm for his people; hence its popularity. It is a lyrical account of the wanderings and sufferings of the Jews down through the centuries; but good history it certainly is not. It knows only two principles—if you dislike anything, condemn it wholly; if you admire anything, then it is altogether praiseworthy. This makes popular reading but bad history.

Graetz gives careful attention to the rise of Christianity; and, of course, in the later portions of Jewish history the Christian world is constantly on the scene. Throughout (and we cannot be surprised and we have little right to protest) Christian treatment of Jews comes in for the bitterest comment. The persecutions in country after country, in century after century, are told in most lurid detail, with passionate sympathy for the suffering race. (The Christian should bear in mind that these accounts, as retold by Graetz, have entered into the flesh and blood of the Jew of to-day and become in a sense a part of his national and religious consciousness.) The astonishing part of Graetz's " History " is his treatment of the life of our Lord. Normally Graetz was the servant and the victim of most violent prejudices. The Kabbalah, the eighteenth-century Hasidic Movement, the Reform Movement, Christianity throughout the ages, Jewish converts to Christianity —all these are treated with trenchant, scornful, scurrilous, venomous and, at times, libellous animosity. We turn to the account of Jesus. The Christian has to confess to surprise, and—humilia-

tion. There is no bitterness in Graetz's portrayal of Jesus. These following words of Graetz might easily have been written about our Lord by a devoted Christian: "High-minded earnestness and spotless moral purity were his undeniable attributes: they stand out in all the authentic accounts of his life. . . . Jesus looked upon the promotion of peace and the forgiveness of injuries as the highest form of virtue. His whole being was permeated by that deeper religion which consecrates to God not only the hour of prayer, a day of penitence . . . but every step in the journey of life, which turns every aspiration of the soul towards God, subjects everything to His will, and with childlike trust commits everything to His keeping." [4a]

For the rest, Graetz follows much the same lines as Salvador and Geiger in confining Jesus to the narrow limits of a purely Jewish framework. Graetz attempted to account for any peculiarities in Jesus, as well as in John the Baptist, by supposing that they were both connected with the Essene community—those Jewish ascetics living a monastic life away from civilization down in the Dead Sea plain. It is characteristic of Graetz, Geiger, Salvador, and most Jewish writers who have followed in their train, that they feel it their first and most bounden duty to deprive the Gospels of any semblance of originality.

Graetz gave his fellow-Jews the blackest possible picture of Christianity from the time of St. Paul onwards, a picture which is the reflection of Christianity's treatment of the Jews; but of Jesus, our Lord Himself, the picture is that of one who fulfilled

an ideal of Jewish piety. Graetz, it may be pointed out, utterly refused to accept the mediæval blasphemous stories of Jesus as representing Jewish opinion of any worth; also he pays no attention to the real or supposed Talmud references.

We come now to the English Jew, Joseph Jacobs. He is chosen here not because he is important as the originator of a new phase, but because he is representative of educated, more or less sophisticated orthodox Judaism, tending towards conservative Reform, at the end of last century. In 1895 he published anonymously a little book entitled *As Others saw Him*. It belongs to the familiar type of fictitious lives of our Lord, attempting to retell the Gospel story as seen through the eyes of an independent contemporary—in this case an Alexandrian Jew imagined as having been present in Jerusalem during our Lord's ministry there. The author makes quite a charming story of it. He depicts Jesus as a compelling, attractive, winning character; he retells the episodes of the Rich Young Man, the Woman taken in Adultery, and Jesus' teaching as to what is the greatest commandment. Material is drawn from other sources, but not out of keeping with the rest of the picture. Indirectly the author introduces the aim of his book: to explain why the Jews refused to accept Jesus. He hails Jesus as thoroughly Jewish, one who observed all the ceremonial laws; as a true Jew He looked on God as His heavenly Father, He had compassion on the poor, helped the fallen, rated the repentant higher than the scrupulously pious. He even had the national defects of the Jew: He never noticed

what was beautiful in nature, never smiled; He taught by tears, threats and scoldings. In all this Jesus was most Jewish of Jews. But in two respects He was wholly strange to them. He did not teach as a messenger sent from God, but taught His own views on His own authority; secondly, He lacked Jewish patriotic feelings. It was this last which finally turned the Jews from Him. Thus a character in the story is made to say: "He evaded our questionings and eluded our testings. He seemed aloof from us and our desires. All Israel was pining to be freed from the Roman yoke, and *he* would have us pay tribute for ever. . . . Jesus died . . . for that he cared naught for our national hopes. We were all panting for national freedom; he would have naught of it. Whether it was that he felt in some sort to be not of our nation, I know not; but in all his teaching he dealt with us as men, not as Jews." "He had spent his life in trying to impress a new ideal upon his people, and they had welcomed him only as the fulfilment of the old ideal which he would have replaced."

We shall hear more of this "unpatriotism" of Jesus in the course of the next lecture.

In passing, reference may be made to the great twelve-volume *Jewish Encyclopedia* published in America during the early years of this century. It can be taken as giving the standard ideas of modern, conservative Reform as well as Westernized Orthodox Judaism. So far as it touches on the subjects of Christianity and our Lord it does not add any ideas beyond those we have already heard. The attitude on the whole is one of friendly but critical neutrality.

The same Joseph Jacobs, just discussed, was one of the Board of Editors, and the same ideas found in his book, *As Others saw Him*, recur from time to time throughout the *Encyclopedia*. The actual article on "Jesus" is by the late Kaufmann Kohler. He finds himself able to speak thus of his subject:

"A great historic movement of the character and importance of Christianity cannot have arisen without a great personality to call it into existence and to give it shape and direction. Jesus of Nazareth had a mission from God; and he must have had the spiritual powers and fitness to be chosen for it."

This veneration of the figure of Jesus must not, however, be taken as typical of Westernized Jewry. Hostility to Christianity and its Founder, stifled or only masked by the age-long habit of the closed mind, still persists to a very great extent among ordinary Western Jews. To these people, in the first decade of this century, it came as a great relief to hear that Jesus had "never really existed at all." This consoling fact they learned on the authority of a German called Drews, an Englishman called Robertson and an American called Smith.[45]

This theory has become extremely popular among Jews. They now argue that since "*they*"—that is, non-Jews, therefore Christians—have themselves declared Jesus to be a myth, then those troublesome problems of Christianity, Jesus and Judaism, can be regarded by all sensible people as permanently shelved.

But to return to the six representatives on our list.

Mr. Claude Montefiore is a leader of the *liberal*

camp in Judaism, the extreme left wing of Reform Judaism. The characteristic of this party is its claim to choose, out of the historic content of Judaism, only those elements which appeal to their judgment as worth preserving in the light of modern thought and knowledge. They correspond very closely to the "Modernists" in the Church of England, and they are just as hotly attacked by the older orthodoxy. Therefore, however interesting their views may be as coming from a Jewish source, they must on no account be supposed to be in any sense typically *Jewish*.

This is what Mr. Montefiore, as long ago as 1894, wrote of Jesus:

"The most important Jew who ever lived, one who exercised a greater influence upon mankind and civilization than any other person, whether within the Jewish race or without it. . . . A Jew whose life and character have been regarded by almost all the best and wisest people who have heard or read of his actions and his words, as the greatest religious exemplar of every age." [5]

In 1910 Mr. Montefiore writes:

"God's nearness was felt by Jesus directly with a vivid intensity unsurpassed by any man." [6] "Jesus differs from, or, as some would say, goes beyond the prophets: 'More than a prophet is here.'" [7]

We have seen how, since the time of Joseph Salvador, Jews have proclaimed loudly that the Gospels, in their religious and ethical teaching, give nothing more than what Judaism already possessed. This is what Mr Montefiore has to say on this point:

"To each individual striking utterance of Jesus

it is likely enough that a good parallel can be found in the Rabbinic literature; but when Jewish scholars adopt this method of disproving the originality of the Gospels, they forget (quite apart from questions of date) the size of the Talmud and the Midrashim" (these, it should be explained, amount in quantity to something like half the bulk of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and were written at various dates between the third and the thirteenth centuries of our era). "The teaching of Jesus is contained in three little books which do not fill more than sixty-eight small pages of tolerably small print. The teaching belongs or is attributed to one man, and constitutes, in large measure, a consistent and harmonious whole. It is not a combination of a thousand different occasional and disconnected sayings of a hundred different Rabbis. Again, as a great scholar rather bitingly said, the greatness of the Gospels as compared with the greatness of the Talmud must be measured by what is not there as well as by what is. (In the Gospels) we have not to neglect a vast quantity of third- and fourth-rate material, and seek for occasional pearls amid a mass of negligible trivialities." [8]

Elsewhere the same Jewish writer says:

"There is a certain spirit and glow about the teaching of Jesus . . . you cannot recognize or do justice to it by saying, 'The teaching of Jesus comprises the following maxims and injunctions; of these some are borrowed from the Old Testament, some are paralleled by the Talmud, and a few are impracticable.' The teaching of Jesus, which has had such gigantic effects upon the world, is more

and other than a dissected list of injunctions. It is not merely the sum of its parts: it is a whole, a spirit." [9]

The last of the six representatives to be considered is "Ahad ha-Am."

Ahad ha-Am, "One of the people" (the pen-name of Mr. Asher Ginzberg), is a modern Jew who has done much hard thinking in order to find for his people a reasonable and fitting place in the scheme of the universe. All along, in season and out of season, he has endeavoured to persuade his fellow-Jews that they have something, as Jews, in their history, their traditions, their culture, their religion, their mentality, worthy of preservation. With Theodor Herzl, the idea of Zionism began as an attempt to command justice and consideration for Jews by making a nation of them in the political sense. With Ahad-ha-Am, the root-principle of Zionism is rather an attempt to create in Palestine a spiritual centre in which any and every form of specifically Jewish art, life, thought or activity could work out its own salvation, free from all things un-Jewish; from this spiritual centre it is hoped that Jewish inspiration may go forth to the Jews the world over; and that even the Gentiles may once again feel themselves impelled to listen to glad tidings from Jerusalem.

The attitude towards Christianity of liberal and Reform Jews like Mr. Montefiore aroused fierce indignation and antagonism in Ahad ha-Am; and quite naturally. *His* great ideal was to find the essence of Judaism and grasp it tightly and at all costs avoid the entanglements of rival attractions. His diagnosis

of Mr. Montefiore, and those who thought like him, was *not* that they merely showed an innocent Jewish appreciation of Christianity, but that they were ceasing to be Jewish and were already half assimilated to Christianity. Ahad ha-Am insisted that while Christianity was all very well for Christians, Jews could have nothing to do with it short of denying the *three most fundamental characteristics of Judaism*. According to Ahad ha-Am these are: (1) Judaism puts the good of *society* first: Christianity cares only for the individual; (2) Judaism cannot suffer any kind of religious veneration directed towards any human tangible personality; and (3) the ethical basis of Judaism is *absolute justice*, whereas in Christianity the ethical principle is confused by compromise with asceticism.

I should like to give long extracts from the essay in which Ahad ha-Am works out his ideas about Judaism and Christianity; but it would take too long. Those who are interested can easily secure it. It has been translated by Mr. Leon Simon.[10] To the Christian mind, the three points made by Ahad ha-Am are curious and important. They will make most Christians rejoice in the fact that they are Christians.

As for the first point, normal humanity *needs* a religion which takes first thought for the frailty and needs of the individual: society can be trusted to work out its own salvation, once the needs of the individual are granted. A League of Nations will never make good men: it needs good men to make a League of Nations. Again, with regard to Ahad ha-Am's second point, the Christian, equally with the Jew, will always resist the crime of making God in

the image of man; but divine revelation to man there *must* be: for the Jews it has been the revelation from Sinai—taking the form of a code of law; for the Christian the revelation has taken the form of a Person—a Person who lived and who died (so the Christian believes) in perfect accord with the will of God.

But it is the *third point* which will give the Christian the greatest shock. Ahad ha-Am tries to show that, ethically, Judaism represents absolute justice; while Christianity stands for asceticism and compromise. This, translated into simple Christian language, means: Jewish morality is based on righteousness, Christian morality is based on *love*. This, of course, we always knew—that the God of the Hebrew prophets was a God of righteousness, whereas the Christian revelation emphasized the fact (not altogether ignored in the Hebrew Prophets) that God is a God of love, mercy and compassion as well.

But Ahad ha-Am would have us understand the consequences: he shows us the deep line of cleavage which the difference makes between the ethical principles of Judaism and those of Christianity.

The Christian "golden rule" is, "Do unto others what you would that men should do unto you." Judaism has the same, or what seems to be the same rule in the negative form: "What is hateful to thyself, do not unto thy neighbour." And Ahad ha-Am believes that in these two forms lies the ethical difference in the two religions*: egotism is the mark

* Yet no less an authority than Maimonides holds both forms as truly representative of Jewish ethics. See his *Sefer ha-Mitzvōth: Mitzvōth 'Asēh*, § 206.

of Jewish ethics; but Christian altruism, he insists, is merely inverted egotism, the substitution of *other* for *self*.

Ahad ha-Am is not content to leave the matter at that. To make an apparently abstruse point clear as daylight he quotes the following case from the Talmud:

Imagine two men travelling in the desert; only one of them has a bottle of water; if both drink they will both die before their journey's end; if only one drinks he will reach safety, but his companion will certainly die. What should the man with the bottle of water do? Rabbi Akiba decided (and Ahad ha-Am fully agrees that the decision counts as a fundamental principle of Jewish morality)—R. Akiba decided that the man with the water should keep it and drink it all himself; because if *both* of them could not survive, it is more *just*, more in accord with God's righteousness, that a man should save himself rather than that he should save his neighbour and so lose his own life. Other things being equal, says Jewish morality, you have no right to assume that your neighbour's affairs are of more worth in God's eyes than your own affairs. Certainly Judaism approves of the laying down of life to fulfil a religious ideal (sanctification of the name of God, martyrdom); but it condemns the man who will suppress himself for the sake of his fellow. Christianity, on the contrary, teaches: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Ahad ha-Am maintains that this, the basic difference between Jewish and Christian ethics, shows the superiority of Jewish ethics, in that it replaces the

illogical Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice, self-renunciation, by the *absolute rule of justice.* There we must be content to leave it.

To sum up. The nineteenth century sees the Jews examining for themselves the Person and teaching of our Lord. They refuse to learn about Christ from Christians. Of this we dare not complain. The Christians have themselves alone to blame if the Jews failed to see Christ reflected in the lives of Christians. The Jews have studied the Person and teaching of our Lord. They have reached certain conclusions. As Christians we know their conclusions to be imperfect, their picture of Jesus to be colourless and fragmentary. It is only *Christians* who can experience Christ to the full. But Christians, in the eyes of Jews, have forfeited the right to be interpreters of Jesus. There we have the terrible tragedy of Christian Jewish relations. One way only lies open: that is, for the Christian to convince the Jew that *he,* the Christian, does indeed, know Jesus, has indeed learnt to follow Jesus, does indeed model his life on the pattern of Jesus, his Saviour and Redeemer, and does indeed rank humility, love of his fellow-men, and forgiveness and forbearance as the indelible marks of the Christian life and character. Then, and not till then, have we the right to expect that Jews will be prepared to listen to a Christian interpretation of Jesus as Christ and Redeemer.

## V

## AT THE PRESENT TIME

In the last lecture we saw the change which the nineteenth century brought about in the Jewish attitude towards Christianity. It would be wrong to describe it as, in general, a change for the better: such change as there was, was nothing more than a modification in the frame of mind of articulate, vocal, educated, Westernized or half-Westernized Jewry only: the majority of the Jews, far removed or removing themselves from any chance of social or intellectual intercourse with Christians, were either ignorant of Christianity, or despised it, or deliberately ignored it, closing their minds to it as to a thing which had meant for them only grievous harm, sorrow and loss in the past, and even still was an ever-present threat to them in their daily surroundings.

I have said nothing of the persecutions which befell the Jews of Russia and East Europe during the nineteenth century. They are well enough known: they have made the Russian words "pogrom" and "hooligan" familiar in the English language. These persecutions were not essentially religious persecutions carried out in the name of Christianity:

they often had quite other motives—racial or economic; but always the same old, inbred, instinctive dislike of the Jew, instilled into Christians by centuries of a Christianity which cultivated this hatred as a substitute for a Christian virtue, or even as a Christian virtue in itself—this same dislike was always invoked and utilized by every pogrom-monger; and it was natural that the Jew should see in all such social eruptions nothing more than repetitions of the same old crimes, Christian anti-Jewish crimes, with which his past history was so thickly bespread.

But even this lamentable condition of things brought about some good. Jews of Eastern Europe emigrated in ever greater numbers—first over the Russian frontiers to Western Europe, and then overseas to America. There, their Jewishness proved, if a drawback at all, only a comparative drawback: they experienced a Christian civilization in which such Christianity as was cultivated aimed in the main not at expressing itself by Jew-hatred, but by an ideal of life which neither Jew nor unbeliever could deny was a noble ideal. The nature of this Christian ideal naturally became a source of interest to thoughtful Jews. With much of it they could sympathize; by much of it they were repelled. The "Christ of dogma" or, as Christians would insist, the Jesus of Christian experience—Him the Jewish mind could not appreciate. But the Jesus of the Gospels, Jesus reduced by the rationalizing processes fashionable at the moment, Jesus reduced to the size and figure of a Jewish teacher of the first century—such a Jesus the Jews could approach with

interest and, they would claim, with understanding also.

Such was the Jewish attitude towards Christianity which developed in certain sections of Jewry in the nineteenth century; and it is such an attitude which is typical of to-day. In Christian eyes this Jewish attitude is vitiated in that it ignores the entire body of Christian interpretation and experience. But then, for reasons which are more plain to Jews than pardonable in Christians, the Jews refuse to accept the credentials of Christians as the only true ambassadors of the Jesus of the Gospels.

In the preceding lecture we reviewed the most representative expressions of *articulate* Jewish opinion to which this new attitude had given rise. They varied between a *lowest* degree of appreciation, which looks upon Jesus as the teacher and exemplar of an enfeebled Judaism, offered to the world by His followers with a more or less pronounced veneer of paganism; they vary between this lowest degree and a *highest* degree of appreciation (that of the Liberal camp in Judaism) which deems Jesus to have taught what was best in Judaism; by choosing with inspired wisdom what was finest and by rejecting the dross and the non-essentials, Jesus showed Himself one of the greatest, if not the greatest Jewish religious genius of all time, one whose beneficial influence throughout the world none can dispute.

In other words, there is a *minimum* Jewish appreciation of our Lord which holds that by "watering down" Judaism, Jesus and His followers made it a religion more easy of acceptance by the

pagan world; and there is a *maximum* Jewish appreciation which holds that by freeing Judaism of what was merely national and sectarian, Jesus enabled the best that was in Judaism to become a world-possession.

I propose to bring this series of lectures to an end by describing the most recent Jewish attempt to appraise the Person and teaching of our Lord, namely, Dr. Joseph Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth: his Times, his Life and his Teaching;* and by indicating the kind of reception which this book has met with in various Jewish circles.

By some Jews the book has been looked upon as a startling and dangerous monstrosity; by others as a welcome novelty. Actually we shall see that in only a few points does it at all overstep the well-defined channels of Jewish opinion in the recent or remote past. It is best described as a book which gathers together the many loose and floating ends of Jewish thought, and anchors them, stabilizes them, or even stereotypes them for a generation or more—very much, for example, as Graetz in his *History of the Jews*, by his treatment of Jesus and Christianity, acted as a fixative of Jewish thought on the subject for more than half a century.

It is important to give a few details of the author himself; for the book, above all things, is an honest and sincere book. Therefore it never, so to speak, oversteps the limits of the personality and experience of its author.

Dr. Joseph Klausner has a great and well-earned reputation as writer, historian, thinker and leader of thought in those Jewish circles mainly concerned

with the present Hebrew cultural revival, commonly called Zionism. His whole life and energies have been devoted to this revival ; and it is characteristic of him, and the many like him, that though an accomplished writer in German and Russian, he has refused for many years to publish anything except in Hebrew, or even to speak publicly except in Hebrew, although this condemns him to a very limited body of readers and a very local fame.

He was born in a small town in Lithuanian Russia in 1874. All his life (except for an interval at a German University) he has lived in an exclusively Jewish environment and Jewish atmosphere of thought. This fact should not be forgotten. Till his fourteenth year he was educated along lines that were becoming usual among broader-minded Jews—combining the best results of the old-fashioned concentration on Talmud and Rabbinic studies with a modicum of subjects contained in an ordinary secular education. Subsequent years, lived in Odessa, provided him with the more conventional Western education, except that, Jew-like, he absorbed a multiplicity of languages, ancient and modern.

When he was sixteen years of age he became an enthusiastic follower of the movement for reviving Hebrew as a spoken language. Soon afterwards he became a sworn friend and follower of Ahad ha-Am, Mr. Asher Ginzberg, the philosopher of the Zionist Movement, and mouthpiece of that variety of Zionism which would concentrate on making Palestine the spiritual centre of world-Jewry rather than merely a material or political Jewish centre. He

began to publish articles in the Hebrew Press on the subject of the Hebrew language revival, and in his early twenties acquired the hall-mark of the Hebrew writer—the honour of writing in *Ha-Shiloach*, a monthly Hebrew journal then edited by Ahad ha-Am. In 1897 he entered the University of Heidelberg, where he studied philosophy and Semitic languages. He took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1902, with the thesis *Jewish Messianic Ideas in the First and Second Centuries.* This was published in 1904 and has become the standard work on the subject. Shortly afterwards Dr. Klausner became the editor of *Ha-Shiloach*, and he has edited it ever since.

In 1907 he was appointed lecturer of History in the Hebrew Seminary at Odessa. He came to Palestine in 1920 and at once took a dominating position in the new Hebrew life of the "Jewish National Home," both as writer and public worker.

He has a long list of books to his credit on several subjects. But the bulk of his labours has been devoted to the history of the Jews, particularly to that period, the years preceding and following the birth of our Lord, from the rise of the Maccabees to the fall of Jerusalem. He has, further, written several volumes on the Messianic idea as it was developed among the Jews. Of kindred, but wider scope are his two books *Judaism and Humanity* and *Early Ethical Ideas among the Jews.*

It is, therefore, obvious that Dr. Klausner's intellectual life has focussed itself very directly on to the period when our Lord lived on earth, and on the Jewish ideas of the Messiah which our Lord came

to fulfil. So there is no gainsaying Dr. Klausner's claims to publish a competent study of the figure of Jesus from the point of view of Jewish history, Jewish ideas of the Messiah, and Jewish ethics. Such a work he published in 1922, in Hebrew of course; and he tells us that it is the result of work carried on through the best part of his life.

The author explains that it is his object to give in Hebrew for Hebrews an account of the Founder of Christianity which shall be free of both Christian and Jewish preconceptions, and so fill an obvious gap in Jewish history, hitherto filled in only by Christian historians.[1]

First, to describe the book generally.

The early chapters are devoted to the sources on which we are dependent for our knowledge of Jesus. The author takes first the non-Christian sources, Jewish and pagan. He deals with the references in the Talmud and then with the stories contained in the mediæval Jewish fables about Jesus. These he shows to be worthless as history, since they are, essentially, deliberate depreciations or satirical perversions of an already existing tradition; all that they can serve to prove is what the mediæval Jews thought about Christianity, and (in the case of the early Talmud references) that the Gospel tradition is traceable to an early date in the first century. This is the first time in the Hebrew literature that a Jew has seriously investigated these early and late Jewish traditions on which the Jewish mind has nourished itself for at least fifteen hundred years and based its private, intimate conceptions of Christianity's origins—it is the first time in Hebrew

that a Jewish writer has investigated these traditions and declared them to be worthless.

The book follows the beaten track in discussing non-Jewish sources. A long section is devoted to a history of the study of the Gospels themselves—that is to say, a history of this study as carried out from the purely literary, documentary and historical point of view—the so-called " Higher Criticism " of the Gospels, which works independently of the traditional Christian and ecclesiastical ideas about them, and tries to estimate them quite apart from theological preconceptions. This is all familiar ground to the Christian student, except for the sections devoted by Dr. Klausner to the work of *Jewish* students of the Gospels, work which has been quite ignored by Christian scholars. As a result of this study, Dr. Klausner arrives at much the same conclusions as those accepted by the criticism fashionable in Germany a generation ago.

A long section follows, virtually a third of the entire book, on the period in which our Lord lived. This is by far the best and most convincing account that has yet been written of the historical, political, cultural, religious and economic conditions into which our Lord was born, and in which He lived and worked and in which He died. Here, for the first time, to the present writer's knowledge, we have placed at our disposal, in correct perspective, all the details of information that can be derived from Jewish sources—sources which hitherto have been used for the purpose by Jewish writers uncritically and without any historical sense of values, or by Christian writers only superficially at second or

third hand, or ignored by Christian writers altogether. These sources and the contemporary conditions are here all reviewed with the one purpose of illuminating the person and labour of Jesus.

Next comes a treatment, point by point, of the events in our Lord's life. Here, again, what is said and concluded covers matters familiar to Christian students; but, throughout, the author is constantly drawing on his specialized knowledge of Jewish sources of information, and, again and again, he enables us to understand better many details in the Gospels and to place them in their true proportion and against their true Jewish background. It is these details, and the full, expert treatment of the period, which form a real contribution to knowledge and the permanent worth of the book. For these, Christian students of the Gospels can feel genuine gratitude to Dr. Klausner. For here it is not a case of giving what is merely Jewish opinion about Jesus and the Gospels, but of giving expert Jewish help in a sphere where the Christian scholar is generally inexpert and superficial.

What, however, has aroused the chief interest in the book and provoked most opposition, is the final, quite short section, dealing with the teaching of Jesus. This teaching is dealt with under the headings: "The Jewishness of Jesus," "Points of opposition between Judaism and the teaching of Jesus," "Jesus' idea of God," "The ethical teaching of Jesus," "The Day of Judgment and the Kingdom of Heaven," "The character of Jesus and the secret of his influence," and, in conclusion, "What is Jesus for the Jews?"

Throughout, the author is groping around to try and find a convincing reason why it was that, although Jesus was so completely Jewish, so completely a product of that time, and so clearly a great influence which has transformed the world—why was it that the Jews as a whole, and the greatest minds of the Judaism of that time—why did they reject Him?

Dr. Klausner satisfies himself (but will certainly not satisfy Christian readers) that the reason, or reasons, were these:

Our Lord's ethical system, His religious outlook, were fundamentally Jewish. Yet He was so immersed in the needs of the individual soul and so overcome by despair of any good arising out of the work-a-day world as He knew it, that He lost touch with reality. Hence His insistence on self-abnegation, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, the cultivation of a degree of humility and self-suppression, such as, if it were carried out in practice, would bring civilization to an end. All these qualities, Dr. Klausner urges, were taught by Judaism, but confined within the limits of reason and practicability; whereas Jesus, in His ethical code, pushed these Jewish principles to such an extreme as to render them un-Jewish and beyond the capacities of man, if he would continue in this ordinary work-a-day world. Dr. Klausner believes that the teachings of Jesus, if carried into practice, would imply the wreckage of civilization, science, legislation and art, and everything that makes life possible and worth while. This is what Dr. Klausner says:

> " Beyond this ethical teaching Jesus gave nothing to his nation. He cared not for reforming the world or civilization; therefore to adopt the teaching of Jesus is to remove oneself from the whole sphere of ordered national and human existence—from law, learning and civics . . . from life within the State, and from wealth in virtually all its forms. How could Judaism accede to such an ethical ideal? —that Judaism to which the monastic ideal had ever been foreign! . . . Therefore he left the course of ordinary life untouched—wicked, cruel, pagan; and his exalted ethical ideal was relegated to a book or, at most, became a possession of monastics and recluses who lived far apart from the paths of ordinary life." [2]

The second and (according to Dr. Klausner) much the most decisive point in the teaching of Jesus which led the people of Israel to reject Him, was His failure to show Himself a true *nationalist.* In the previous lecture we saw that this nationalist *motif* figured in Jewish comment on Jesus nearly a hundred years ago in the work of Joseph Salvador; we saw it more prominently in Joseph Jacob's romance, *As Others saw Him.* But with Dr. Klausner the nationalist *motif* has assumed such enormous proportions as to dominate the writer's entire outlook on our Lord, on His every act and word.

We are accustomed to think of " nationalism " as a phase in international politics of comparatively recent growth. But Dr. Klausner throughout

thinks and writes, and measures and weighs, and praises and condemns, as though the rank and file of Jewry in the time of our Lord had precisely the same nationalist ideals and fears which move the most enthusiastic and fanatical nationalists of to-day. To Dr. Klausner (and he reads the same ideas into the minds of the Jews of the first century) the paramount criterion of our Lord's acceptableness by the Jews was His attitude towards Jewish nationalist ambitions, towards what *counted* in Jewish nationalism, what constituted its essential characteristics, and what made for its survival. Thus Dr. Klausner writes :

> " The Judaism of that time, however, had no other aim than to save the tiny nation, the guardian of great ideals, from sinking into the broad sea of heathen culture, and enable it, slowly and gradually, to realize the moral teaching of the Prophets in *civil life* and in the *present world* of the Jewish state and nation. . . . Judaism is not only religion and it is not only ethics : it is the sum-total of all the needs of the nation placed on a religious basis. It is a national world-outlook with an ethico-religious basis. . . . Judaism is a national life, a life which the national religion and human ethical principles (the ultimate object of every religion) embrace without engulfing. Jesus came and thrust aside all the requirements of the national life ; and it was not that he set them apart and relegated them to their separate sphere in the life of the nation : he ignored them completely ;

> in their stead he set up nothing but an ethical-religious system, bound up with his conception of the Godhead. In the selfsame moment he both annulled Judaism as the life-force of the Jewish nation and also the nation itself as a nation. For a religion which possesses only a certain conception of God and a morality acceptable to *all* mankind does not belong to any special nation, and consciously or unconsciously breaks down the barriers of nationality. This inevitably brought it to pass that his people, Israel, rejected him." [3]

In his final chapter Dr. Klausner attempts to explain what, to his mind, Jesus stands for to the Jews of the present time. The Jews, he says, cannot regard Jesus as God, nor Son of God in the Trinitarian sense; nor can they regard Him as the Messiah, nor yet as a prophet. "But," to quote the writer, "for the Jewish nation Jesus is a great teacher of morality and an artist in parable. He is *the* moralist for whom, in the religious life, morality counts as—everything. Indeed, as a consequence of this extremist standpoint his ethical code has become simply an ideal for the isolated few, a *Zukunfts-Musik*, an ideal for the 'Days of the Messiah,' when an 'end' shall have been made of this 'old world,' this present social order. It is no ethical code for the nations and the social order of to-day." [4]

"But," he goes on to say, "in his ethical code there is a sublimity, a distinctiveness and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew ethical

code; neither is there any parallel to the remarkable art of his parables. The shrewdness and sharpness of his proverbs and his forceful epigrams serve, in an exceptional degree, to make ethical ideas a popular possession. If ever the day should come and this ethical code be stripped of its wrappings of miracles and mysticism, the Book of the Ethics of Jesus will be one of the choicest treasures in the literature of Israel for all time." [5]

Before touching on the nature of the reception which the book called forth from the Jewish world, I should like to touch on the rather difficult question: "What, if anything, does the book add to the Jewish attitude towards our Lord?"

If you put this question to the ordinary educated Palestinian Jew, in nineteen cases out of every twenty you will get the answer: *En bo shum hiddush* —"There's nothing whatever new in it." And such a remark is largely true in the sense they have in mind, namely, that all the many streams of thought and the possible explanations of this difficulty and that, and the various standpoints adopted towards this or that phase of the life, Person, character and teaching of our Lord—all of these which are contained in Dr. Klausner's book may be found complete in detail, or sketched in outline, or vaguely hinted at in a multitude of writers who have preceded him. In that sense the author has done no more than refurbish the conclusions of modern Gentile critical study of the Gospels and supplement this with the results so far secured by Jewish studies in and around the subject. Again, Dr. Klausner's estimate of the character and teaching of Jesus does

not (except, of course, in closeness and intimacy and minuteness of treatment) advance much, if at all, beyond the conclusions of such writers as Salvador, Geiger or Graetz; it falls far, very far short of the appreciativeness expressed by certain Jewish Liberals, like Mr. Montefiore. It is not in the novelty of its ideas that the significance of the book lies: even the nationalistic *motif* which strikes most Christian readers as so odd—even this follows a beaten track in the Jewish attitude towards Jesus.

The significance really lies in this—and Jews have been the most prompt in pointing out the fact—that it has been deemed suitable by one of whose ardent, passionate, enthusiastic, even fanatical Judaism, of whose thorough and complete Jewishness there can be no two opinions—such a one has thought fit to devote intense labour and care to the writing of a book devoted solely to the times, life and teaching of Jesus the Jew. A writer with a most responsible position in the world of Jewish thought, even a leading figure in the concentrated, intensified atmosphere of the very centre of that world of Jewish thought, in Palestine—such a man has thought it worth the trouble, and even his duty, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, to write in Hebrew for the benefit of his fellow-Hebrews, a weighty, learned treatise, calling forth his best powers; and all for what?—to present to fellow-Hebrews the figure of Jesus, a Jew who taught Jewish religious ideas and moral principles to the Jews of Palestine early in the first century.

In the spring of 1926 extraordinary excitement and interest were shown by the Jews in Palestine in the performance of a Hebrew play called *Ha-Dibbuk*.

That play treats of a condition of Jewish life in Eastern Europe known as *Hasidism*. This Hasidism the enlightened, educated Jews of the West have, for a hundred years, tried to forget, to ignore, and condemn as humbug, silly superstition, debased mysticism, crude charlatanism. But this same Hasidism has now become a subject of immense fascination to the nationalist Jews of to-day. They regard it as one of the spiritual creations of Jewry, a possession of their race to be treasured and studied.

In much the same way, this book by Dr. Klausner is symptomatic of a desire in certain sections of Jewry to collect, treasure and study this nineteen-hundred-year-old phenomenon which arose from among the Jews of old—the Person and teaching of Jesus, and to claim Him as a figure in the gallery of Jewish worthies. It is not—and Christians should not deceive themselves on the subject—it is not at all of the nature of a Jewish approach to *Christianity*: the Christ of Christian dogma and the institutionalism of the Christian Church with its hierarchy and ecclesiastical machinery—the Jew is as much repelled by these as ever he was; to him they are symbols of bitterest cruelty, savage, senseless and fanatical persecution and wholesale murder. No, it is not a sign of Jewish approach to Christianity; but it is an attempt to rescue from the hands of Christendom a figure whom the Jews can claim to be, historically and humanly, their own.

It is a most unexpected by-product of the rise of the Jewish nationalist instinct and the revival of Jewish culture.

This book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, appeared, in Hebrew,

from an apostle of Hebrew culture, thought and learning, and from the centre of the newly revived Hebrew life in Palestine. One American Jewish paper hailed it as the first scientific work published in Hebrew literature; and an English Jewish paper (but with a distinct touch of bitterness) made the comment: "Dr. Klausner and his book are of the first-fruits of the new *Yishub*" (the Hebrew settlement in Palestine).[6] So long as the book remained in its original Hebrew dress, its effect was only felt in those Jewish circles for whom Hebrew counted as something real—namely, among educated, more or less orthodox Jews in Eastern Europe, among professional Jewish scholars, and, first and foremost, among those, in Palestine and outside of it, who were affected by the modern revival of Hebrew life. The reactions were, on the whole, what might have been expected.

From certain orthodox circles there came nothing but a significant silence. From another direction came a substantial volume, couched in a tone of most lurid vituperation of the new book and scurrilous abuse of its author, reminding one somewhat of the seventeenth-century political pamphlets. What most disturbed this critic was that a leading Jew should bolster up the superstition that there ever was such a person as Jesus. I am, however, warned that it is unfair to Jews generally to refer to this criticism as emanating from a representative or even a responsible Jewish source.

A more weighty criticism came at an early stage from Dr. Aaron Kaminka, a scholar and orthodox Jew. He writes as follows:

"Primarily we must protest in the name of our faith and our clear conscience against this presentation of the legendary figure of the founder of the Christian faith as the central figure in the events of the time of the spreading of the New Testament, and against exalting 'that man' on high, and the respect paid to him as a lofty ethical personality truly fitted for the propounding of a new Torah, and to be a 'light to the Gentiles'—implying explicitly or implicitly that our fathers were smitten with blindness in that they failed to perceive this holy phenomenon and the Messiahship of 'that man.' This idea underlies the very title of the book and penetrates, like a scarlet thread, the entire order of events and legends and hypotheses and investigations. The whole order of the book, and the prevailing spirit in it, are a truckling and kow-towing to the Christian religion and an assertion of great affection for the foggy figure of its founder, a denial of the healthy sense of our saintly forefathers, those enthusiastic Hebrews devoted heart and soul to the service of the One God, Creator of heaven and earth, who rejected with loathing those fables and inventions, knowing the hero of those stories to have been no more than a 'mocker at the words of the Wise,' 'a seducer and beguiler,' a hater of the people of Israel, and one who sought the nation's destruction." [7]

Here, we readily perceive, speaks that Jewish mind which can only look at the figure of our Lord

through the acrid, red fog of Jewish sufferings at the hands of Christianity.

But by Jewish scholars on the whole, and by most elements in Jewry interested in the Hebrew revival, the book was accepted as a great and important addition to Hebrew literature and to Jewish history. But mixed with this reception was a sense of awed surprise at the dangerous temerity of the author—to dare to treat such a forbidden subject and to handle it with such utter disregard of the dominant Jewish prejudice. These fears, as it turned out, were not unjustified. Startled prejudices were aroused, and pressure applied in certain high places, with results which I need not specify, since they have not altogether been permanent.

More curious, however, was a charge (in an American Zionist organ) against the author of showing a lack of tact, as regards the Christian world—a charge illustrating the ever-present dread in some Jewish minds of "What will the Gentiles say?" While describing the book as profound and scholarly, this same critic regards it as a premature venture. The criticism winds up with the words: "The time is not yet ripe: as long as the adherents of Christ do not accept the teachings of Jesus, the Jews must be silent."

When the book was published in an English translation it was made accessible to an infinitely wider circle of readers, Jewish and Gentile. Naturally its novelty to most English-speaking Jews was not always apparent at first sight. Books by Jews on Jesus had been published before, occasionally in England and very often in America, by authors who

belonged either to a more advanced Reform Judaism in America, or to the Jewish Liberals on both sides of the Atlantic. Many things said by Dr. Klausner had also been said by them. The great difference, of course, is that while *their* sentiments had arisen from the midst of a civilized Christian environment, and were always redolent of tact, in view of their mostly Christian circle of readers, Dr. Klausner, on the other hand, speaks from an environment exclusively and intensively Jewish.

From the side of Liberal Judaism the most distinctive comment has come from Mr. Montefiore. He devotes to the book a long, seven-column review in the *Jewish Guardian*.[8] I propose to quote from it at considerable length, mainly because of the passages which Mr. Montefiore himself picks out from Dr. Klausner as being most characteristic. It is, as we should expect, the *nationalism* in the book which most intrigues the reviewer.

He quotes the following :

> " A religion which possesses only a certain conception of God and a morality acceptable to all mankind does not belong to any special nation, and, consciously or unconsciously, breaks down the barriers of nationality."

Mr. Montefiore's comment is :

> " Some of us have no longer any place for a national religion, whether it be Judaism or any other. For us a national religion belongs to the museum of antiquities or to the lumber-room. But to our author, religion must be the

handmaid of the nation, or, at any rate (since what other nations choose to have or do is their affair)—for the Jews, at any rate, *their* religion must be strictly national! The nation and the national life, as always, first and last!

"One can understand" (proceeds Mr. Montefiore) "how all this sort of thing has arisen in Dr. Klausner's mind. One can well imagine, too, how in a Russian Jew's soul, born in 1874, there should be bitterness and occasional unfairness to Christianity. It is thus that we can account for an occasional strange outburst, such as: 'Jesus left the course of ordinary life untouched—wicked, cruel, pagan; his exalted ethical idea was relegated to a book, or, at most, became a possession of monastics and recluses who lived far apart from the paths of ordinary life.' Or" (continues Mr. Montefiore) "such an amazing paradox and exaggeration as: 'Such has been the case with Christianity from the time of Constantine till the present day: the religion has stood for what is highest ethically and ideally, while the political and social life has remained at the other extreme of barbarism and paganism.' And" (Mr. Montefiore goes on to say) "the iron in our author's soul, his passionate nationalism, his admiration for the Zealots, and his old Jewish prejudices, are all embodied in the following amazing sentence: '*Christian* morality was embodied in daily life by . . . Judaism; it is Judaism and Judaism only which has never produced murderers and pogrom-mongers, whereas indul-

gence and forgiveness have become the prime feature in its being, with the result that the Jews have been made moral (not in theory but in living fact) to the verge of abject flaccidity.'

"I will not" (proceeds Mr. Montefiore) "comment upon this sentence; it speaks for itself; what is deeply interesting is that, in spite of this iron in the soul, in spite of his prejudices (which, for example, as regards monasticism and asceticism, so completely prevent him appreciating their services and value in the history of European civilization)—in spite of this, Dr. Klausner is yet so open-eyed and so fair. We have seen how, from his nationalist point of view, he dislikes and condemns the negative and polemical attitude of Jesus towards the ceremonial law (which to Dr. Klausner is synonymous with a specifically Jewish national culture) and yet such is his fairness and open-eyedness, that he constantly points out how this attitude (of Jesus) was—up to a measure—justified by the facts. He (Dr. Klausner) virtually allows that a prophet who should do as Jesus did was justified and desirable.

"Nevertheless" (Mr. Montefiore goes on to say) "his (Dr. Klausner's) passionate nationalism warps his judgment and causes him to make such very odd statements as the following, in which we clearly see how religion, in our author's mind, occupies a subordinate place. He has sought to show that, in Rabbinic Judaism, religion had become more democratic

and more nationalistic, and how there were mixed up with religion elements of science, jurisprudence, medicine and general culture, which caused religion, in Dr. Klausner's words, 'to escape the danger of exclusiveness and one-sidedness.' And then he (Dr. Klausner) goes on to say: 'What did Jesus do? Had he come and said, Instead of religion alone, I give you here science and art as national possessions independent of religion; instead of Scripture commentaries, I give you learning and poetry, also independent of religion; instead of ceremonial laws, grown so oppressive as to crush the warmer religious feelings, instead of those I give you a practical and theoretical secular culture, national and humanistic;—had Jesus come with such a Gospel, his name would have endured as a blessing among his nation. But he did not come and enlarge his nation's knowledge and art and culture, but to abolish even such culture as it possessed, bound up with religion, a culture which the Scribes and Pharisees . . . seized upon and held tightly, as though it were the single anchor of safety left to the nation—a nation not minded to be only a religious community, but a real nation, possessed of a land, a state and authority in every sense.'

"It would take too long" (concludes Mr. Montefiore) "to discuss this curious passage in which our author's nationalist and secular attitude towards both Judaism and Jesus are very apparent. It would need a long pamphlet

to disentangle the odd mixture of truth and falsehood, of just appreciations and inaccurate and irrelevant estimates, in his picture of the character and teaching of Jesus. . . . Meanwhile, the interest of the book remains the same, however much one may differ from its point of view. The author's learning is great. His measure of objectivity, in spite of all deductions, is, in the circumstances, most commendable and remarkable. . . . No such Jewish life of Jesus has ever been published before. It is written from a point of view which, to most of us Westerners, is totally novel and unexpected. So, for every reason, his book is one which all of us, orthodox or liberal, Jew or Christian, would do well to read."

Another English Jewish paper, of by no means Liberal tendencies, *The Jewish World*,[9] gave an article in unstinted praise of Dr. Klausner's work. The writer points out, and welcomes, the great change which, he alleges, has come about within the last twenty years in the attitude towards Jesus of the younger generation of Jews in Eastern Europe. Very curiously he dates the change from what he calls " the pogrom year of 1906." As a result of these pogroms, he writes, " a religious revival swept the Eastern ghetto. Their hopes for freedom shattered, their expectation for redemption gone, they turned towards God. In those years the younger generation of Jewish writers and poets in Eastern Europe discovered the figure of Jesus, and since those days Jesus has been with them a topic

of discussion." This, I should remind you, is written by a Jew.

The same writer hails Dr. Klausner's work as "a book of the first magnitude . . . for the first time in nineteen hundred years a rabbinical Jew discusses the life of Jesus without prejudice, and instead of continuing the old Jewish tradition, makes an end of it, and goes a step further by representing the Founder of Christianity as the embodiment of religious and ethical idealism. He does not propose that the Jews should accept Jesus as Christ, but he does propose that they should accept him as a great ethical personality. The revolutionary character of this proposal can only be understood and appreciated when one realizes that it was made *in Jerusalem* by the *foremost orthodox Jewish scholar of our time*—after that innumerable Jewish generations had come and gone without pronouncing the name of Jesus."

In America, immediately before Christmas, 1925, attention was directed to the book in more sensational fashion. Dr. Stephen Wise is an American Liberal Jew of somewhat similar outlook to Mr. Montefiore. Before a large Jewish audience, three thousand in number, he referred to Dr. Klausner's book with approval. "He thanked God such a book could be written, published and read. . . . It marks" (Dr. Wise is reported to have said)—"it marks the first chapter in a new literature. Such a book could never have been written a few years ago. You all know what would have happened to the Jew who would have dared to express his opinion, based on facts, of Jesus a score of years ago.

Thank God the time has come when men are allowed to be frank, sincere and truthful in their beliefs. This book, overlooked by the Press and handled wretchedly by reviewers, who have missed the point completely, is the greatest book of its kind ever published. . . .

"The very foundations of morality," said Dr. Wise in this same speech, "are contained in the unparalleled code of ethics which comprises the teachings of Jesus. . . . Because *Christendom* has renounced Jesus in fact, shall *we* continue to deny him now that we, his brother Jews, are free to face his life and teaching anew? Shall we not say that this Jew is *soul of our soul*, and that the soul of his teaching is Jewish and nothing but Jewish? The teaching of Jesus the Jew is a phase of the spirit which led the Jew Godward."

The result of this statement by Dr. Wise was that the American Press seized the opportunity for a sensation, indulged in a characteristic orgy of headlines, and Dr. Stephen Wise and Dr. Klausner found themselves the centre of a newspaper storm. Dr. Wise was bitterly attacked by orthodox Jewry. Though there was much of inter-Jewish party politics underlying the attacks, there was still playing its part a very great deal of the old leaven of orthodox Jewish abhorrence towards any Jew who dared to turn his thoughts towards Christianity and its Founder. Dr. Wise's quite ordinary reference to the ideals of Christianity were sufficient to make certain types of Jew accuse him of trying to pervert Jews from the faith of their fathers.

Dr. Wise's reply is very much to the point for the

subject of these lectures. "Who," he says, "who save in folly or with malice, will charge me with urging my people to forswear their faith and life by embracing Christianity? or accepting Jesus? *But* a question remains to be answered. Because of Christian dogma or unchristian injustice to the Jew, shall the Jew *never* feel free objectively to face and revaluate, as Klausner does, the teaching of a Galilæan Jew of the first century? What a mournful commentary upon the infinite hurt which the Jew has suffered at the hands of Christendom!—that a Jewish teacher cannot even at this time speak of Jesus, his completely Jewish background and his ethical contribution to his time and for all time, without being hailed as a convert to Christianity, or misunderstood by some of his fellow-Jews, to whom the centuries have, alas, made the Christian name synonymous with injustice and wrong? . . . Shall Jews for *ever* refuse to claim Jesus either because of the centuries of misunderstanding and Christlessness which have grown out of the stories touching the manner of his death, or because Christendom is not yet become Christian? . . . I do not need to be a Christian in order to recognize the place of Jesus in the great Jewish tradition. Israel gave Jesus the man and the Jew to humankind. For the most part, Christendom has denied him in deed, though affirming him in name. Is not the hour come for *us*, his fellow-Jews, to place Jesus exactly where he belongs—this radiant Jewish teacher of Palestine of the first century?" [10]

I will give only two more quotations in this connection. The first extract, quoted from an

American Yiddish paper,[11] gives the general tone assumed in American orthodox circles: "Does not Dr. Wise know how much of our blood has been shed for the God whom he now wants to adopt? Does not Dr. Wise know that the 'soul of our soul' has kept us in burning tongs since the time when this 'soul' was invented? Instead of reading the English clergyman's translation of Dr. Klausner's book, would it not be advisable that Dr. Wise should look through the *Jewish History* again?"

The second quotation is from an English Jewish newspaper:[12] "For a Jew to preach—in any form—to Jews on *Jesus* is an abomination, it is 'death' or betrayal of the soul . . . the very name of the world-historic phenomenon, such as is the figure of Jesus, ought to fill the heart of every true Jew with trepidation. Is it not for nigh upon twenty centuries that the blood of innocent thousands of Jewish men, women and children has been, and still is, spilt for Christ's sake?"

So, then, we find that even the Christian civilization of America and England is still not enough to cover up the Jew's memory of pain and injustice in his nation's past![13]

It is painfully simple to sum up this course of lectures.

Nineteen hundred years of Christian dealings with Jews have brought it to pass that Christians, the sworn soldiers and servants of Jesus, despite centuries of real Christian endeavour, in spite of the saintly lives lived by countless hosts of holy and humble men of heart, apostles, saints and martyrs—

despite all these, Christians as such have not been, and still are not, in Jewish eyes, the true torch-bearers of Jesus of Nazareth. "Ye are the light of the world"; that is our Lord's commission to us, His disciples. Have we failed? Not entirely. The light of Christianity has shone in the darkest places of the earth, and still is shining throughout the greater part of the civilized world. It is the Jews alone who, all through our history, have stood aloof, watched that light and rejected that light—or, it would perhaps be more true to say, have rejected those who were the bearers of that light.

The reason is plain: the Christian, wherever he was confronted by the Jew, has straightway cast away his Christian torch, rejected his Lord's commission, arrogated to himself the right of vengeance where our Lord Himself forgave. The Christian Church, wherever and whenever the power lay in its hands, has shown to the Jewish race only the darkened, blackened wall of vengeance, of hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, acts unblessed by our Lord; it has not shown *them* the bright light of Christian charity.

Are *we* to blame the Jews if they have failed to see Christ in His *Church*, and now, at last, go groping to find Him in their own way, using for their guide any will-o'-the-wisp of a passing fashion of thought? Are *we* to blame the Jews if they turn with horror from the one possible guide, when all that they know of that guide, which is the Christian Church—when all they know of *it* is that for *them* it has spelled oppression, persecution and murder throughout the weary passage of centuries?

# NOTES

## LECTURE I

[1] On the Sadducees, see G. H. Box, "Who were the Sadducees?" *Expositor*, January, 1918; J. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London, 1925), pp. 216–22, and the references there given.

[2] See R. T. Herford, *Pharisaism* (London, 1912); *The Pharisees* (London, 1924).

[3] See Klausner, *op. cit.*, pp. 206–12.

[4] See K. Kohler, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Zealots," XII. 639 ff.; in "Memorial Volume to A. A. Harkavy," German section, pp. 6–18 (Petersburg, 1909), "Wer waren die Zeloten oder Kannaim?"; Klausner, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–6.

[5] Gittin 56*b*–57*a*.

[6] This nephew, called "Kalonymos" or "Kalonikos" in the Talmud, is probably Flavius Clemens, nephew of Domitian, put to death as an atheist in A.D. 96.

[7] t. Yebamoth, III. 3; Yoma 66*b*.

[8] Aboda Zara 16*b*–17*a*; t. Hullin, II. 24.

[10] Berachoth, 12*a*.

[11] Matt. xix. 18.

[12] j. Berachoth, V. 3.

[13] Berachoth, 28*b*.

[14] j. Berachoth, V. 3.

[15] R. Shimeon ben Gamaliel, Aboth I.

[16] j. Pea, I.; Sanhedrin, I.; t. Sanhedrin, XII.

[17] Megillah (j. and b.) end.

[18] Shabbath, 116*a*.

[19] Antiquities, XX. ix. 1. On the "Jewishness" of the Epistle of James, see Joseph Halévy *Révue Sémitique*, XXII. (1914), pp. 197–201.

[20] So H. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (English translation), II. 374.

## LECTURE II

[1] For the variants in this "Twelfth Blessing" in the *Amidah*, see *J.Q.R.* (New Series) XVI. 156 f.; *J.E.* XI. 280 f.

[2] *Hesronoth ha-Sha's* (Cracow, 1895).

[3] Cod. Theodos. Tit. XVI. viii.

[4] Cod. Theodos. Tit. XII. viii. 3–4.
[5] Socrates, *H.E.* II. 33, VII. 13; Sozomen, *H.E.* III. 17.
[6] Cod. Theodos., XVI. 22.
[7] Cf. Socrates, *H.E.* VII. 16.
[8] H. Milman, *History of the Jews* (edition 1909), II. 199.
[9] cf. Milman, II. 191, 200.
[10] Milman, II. 239.
[11] For a full discussion of this material see R. T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London, 1905); for a more critical treatment see Klausner, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–47.
[12] This summary is taken, with slight modifications, from R. T. Herford's article, "Christianity in Jewish Literature" in *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, II. 877, where all the references can be found.
[13] *Leges Wisi-Gothorum*, Lib. XII.
[14] Quoted in Milman, *op. cit.*, II. 260.
[15] *Op. cit.*, II. 282.
[16] The Jew-hunt cry, "Hep! hep!" has probably a more prosaic origin—the cry of goat-herds urging on their flocks.
[17] On the *Tol'doth Yeshu*, and for the relevant literature, see Klausner, *op. cit.*, 47–53. The short abstract here given is taken from R. T. Herford's article in *D.C.G.*, cited above. Klausner, *op. cit.*, gives a more detailed summary. Both these summaries are based on that form of the legend given in Wagenseil's *Tela Ignea Satanæ* (Altdorf, 1681). Another version, obviously later in date, is to be found in J. J. Huldreich, *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni* (Leyden, 1705). Samuel Krauss, in *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Berlin, 1902), prints three different complete recensions of the fable together with fragments of others.

## LECTURE III

[1] See Davidson, *Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, Philadelphia, 1923, p. xxxii.
[2] See his *Emunot we De'ot*, ii. 5.
[3] *Cuzari*, iv. 23.
[4] *Yad: Melakim*, xi, 4.
[5] Milman, *op. cit.*, II. 319.
[6] In the eleventh century. See Ademar, Hist. iii. 52.
[7] *Ma'amar ha-Ahdut*, iii.
[8] See Ludwig Geiger, *Johann Reuchlin*, Leipzig, 1871; Horowitz, *Zur Biographie und Korrespondenz J. Reuchlins*, Vienna, 1877.
[9] See Geiger, *op. cit. supra.*
[10] *Sämmtliche Werke* (Frankfort a.M., 1826–57), xxix. 46–7, 74.
[11] xxv. 409, 260.
[12] *Von den Juden und Ihren Luegen*, xxxii. 99 ff.
[13] xxxii. 257.

[14] For further details see Graetz, *History of the Jews* (English translation), V. 197 ff.; *Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII. 455 with Bibliography.

[15] Graetz, *op. cit.* V. 199 ff.; *J.E.* V. 80 f.

[16] Graetz, *op. cit.* V. 205 ff.

[16a] On the contrary, it is a matter for note, that although the Christian censorship was never applied in Rotterdam nor, of course, in Turkey, there is no example of the Jews taking advantage of such freedom to print anti-Christian writings.

[17] *Resen Mat'eh*, 15b; *Lehem ha-Shamayim* to *Aboth* V. 17.

[18] Wünsche in Lessing-Mendelssohn's "Gedenkbuch," pp. 329 ff.

## LECTURE IV

[1] See Kayserling, *Moses Mendelssohn, sein Leben und seine Werke*, Leipzig, 1862.

[2] See Gabriel Salvador, *Joseph Salvador, sa vie, ses œuvres et ses critiques* (Paris, 1881).

[3] *Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte* (2nd ed., 1865), pp. 108–48.

[4] See especially *Sinai et Golgotha, ou les origines du judaïsme et du Christianisme* (Paris, 1867). The substance of this volume was later embodied in his fuller *History of the Jews*.

[4a] *History of the Jews* (English translation), II. 149–50.

[4b] Drews popularized in Germany the conclusions of Albert Kalthoff, *Die Entstehung des Christentums*, 1903. But the same ideas, arguments and conclusions were put forward more than a century earlier. See Ch. F. Dupuis, *Mémoires sur l'origine des constellations et sur l'explication de la fable par l'astronomie*, 1791; the same author's *Origine des tous les cultes, ou réligion universelle*, 1796.

[5] *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1894, p. 381.

[6] *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus* (London, 1910), p. 88.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[9] *Synoptic Gospels* (London, 1909), I. civ–cv.

[10] The original essay was published in *Ha-Shiloach* (XXIII. 97–111) in Hebrew, entitled *Al Sh'te ha-S'ippim*. It is translated by Mr. Leon Simon in the volume of essays by Ahad ha-Am, *Essays on Zionism and Judaism* (London, 1922), pp. 223–53.

## LECTURE V

[1] English translation, p. 11.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 397.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 390.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 414.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 414.
[6] *Jewish Chronicle*, January 1, 1926.
[7] *Ha-Toren* (New York), May 1922.
[8] November 13, 1925.
[9] December 30, 1925.
[10] For reports of Dr. Stephen Wise's remarks and their results, see *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, New York, for December 23, 1925, and following days.
[11] *Der Tag*, New York, December 25, 1925.
[12] *Jewish Chronicle*, February 26, 1926.
[13] The following appeared in *Ha-Doar* (an American Jewish weekly paper, published in Hebrew), November 19th, 1926, from the pen of a Hebrew writer of considerable repute :

> " It is a proof of feebleness in many of our younger writers —the obvious pleasure they take in using words like ' crucifixion,' ' Golgotha,' and all that class of word, apparently finding in them some sort of spiritual uplift. And the name ' Jesus ' itself actually incites their pens to creative effort . . . they *love* the name. . . . I should wonder whether even among Christians the picture arouses such enthusiasm.
>
> " I have always admired Ahad ha-Am for his dislike of Christianity for both its content and its form. What a fine aesthetic sense such dislike shows ! It is utterly inconceivable that Ahad ha-Am should write such a book as that written by his disciple [Dr. Klausner] : to him the mere subject matter would be nauseous. Any present-day Gentile, if he has any spirit left, is bound to loathe the whole gloomy business ; while as for ourselves, it is the starkest horror !
>
> " We have to shut our eyes tight even against the *source* of the matter (innocuous though it may have been originally) because of the mass of terrible foulness which it has since accumulated owing to a fatal confusion. . . . If any poet of our day, even a Christian, approaches some creative idea and takes Jesus as subject in the old-fashioned way, it only proves his limited outlook and stuffy mentality. *Jesus must never again even cross our minds.*"

(Italics according to the original.)

# INDEX


Ahad-ha-Am (A. Ginzberg), 81–85, 90
Annas II, 14
Anti-semiticism, 23, 31, 40, 48
Arian controversy, 27
*As Others saw Him*, 76, 96

Black Death, 44
Breach with Christianity, 15

Christ, attitude to, 3, 8, 15, 18, 34, 68, 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 79, 87, 94–99, 109–10
Christianity, attitude to, 2–4, 6, 8, 10, 19, 20, 27, 59, 67, 75, 82, 88, 101, 111, 114
Christian writings, attitude to, 11, 13
Constantine, 24
Crusades, 33

Delitzsch, 69
Disraeli, 69
Dominicans, 48, 50

Eisenmenger, J. A., 56
Eliezer the Great, R. 10
Emancipation, 64
Emden, Jacob, 58
Essenes, 7, 16, 75

Fall of Jerusalem, 16, 20
Feudal system, 43

Geiger, A., 71
Gentiles, 5, 15, 19
Gospels, 5, 75, 80, 93
Graetz, H., 73, 89

*Ha-Shiloach*, 91
Hasidim, 101
Hebrews, Ep. to, 16
Herzl, 81
*History of the Jews*, 73
*Hizzuk Emunah*, 58

Ibn Gabirol (Avicebron), 41
Inquisition, 45
Isaac of Troki, 58
Islam, 30, 41

Jacobs, J., 76, 78
James, St., 14
*Jesus Christ and His Teaching*, 70
*Jesus of Nazareth*, 89, 92–111
*Jewish Encyclopedia*, 77
Jews in :
  America, 67, 87, 104, 110, 113
  France, 32
  Germany, 48, 69
  Roman Empire, 24
  Russia and Eastern Europe, 63, 86, 109
  Spain, 31–32, 41, 60
  Syria and Palestine, 22, 25, 110
Judah ha-Levi, 42
Judas, 35

Kaminka, Dr. A., 102
Klausner, Dr. J., 89
Kohler, K., 78

Law of Moses, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 65, 71




CAMBRIDGE
LIBRARY

Louis, St., 43
Luther, 51–55

Maimonides, 42
Marranos, 45
Mendelssohn, Moses, 64
*Minim* and *Minuth*, 8, 11, 12, 20
*Mishnah*, 22, 58
Montefiore, C., 78, 82, 105

*Nathan the Wise*, 60
Nationalism, 7, 16, 71, 96, 105

Orthodox Jews, 68, 111

Pantera, 28, 34
Paul, St., 5, 11, 12, 72
Pauline Epistles, 5
Persia, 27
Pfefferkorn, 48
Pharisees, 7
*Protocols of Elders of Zion*, 31

Reform and Liberal Judaism, 65–66, 79, 81, 105
Reformation, 47
Reuchlin, 48–52
Ritual murder, 44, 49, 55

Sa'adiah, 42
Sadducees, 7, 9
Salvador, J., 70, 96
Scripture, 13
Sects, Jewish, 7
*Shulchan Arukh*, 66
Simon Kephas, 36
Surenhuysius, W., 57
Synagogue services, 11–13, 20, 65

*Talmud*, 9, 10, 20, 21–23, 27, 32, 48–52, 66, 80, 92
Tarphon, R., 13
*Tela ignea Satanæ*, 56
Toledo, Council of, 31
Tradition of the Elders, 15, 21

Wagenseil, J. C., 56
Wise, Dr. S., 110

Yaabetz, Joseph, 46
*Yeshu, History of*, 34–37, 46

Zealots, 8
Zionism, 81, 90

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